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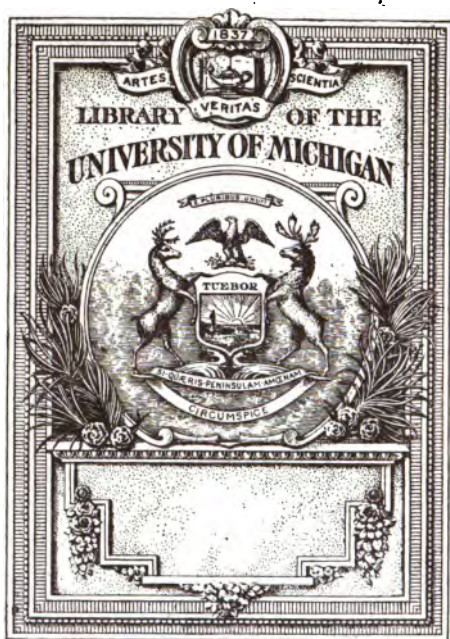
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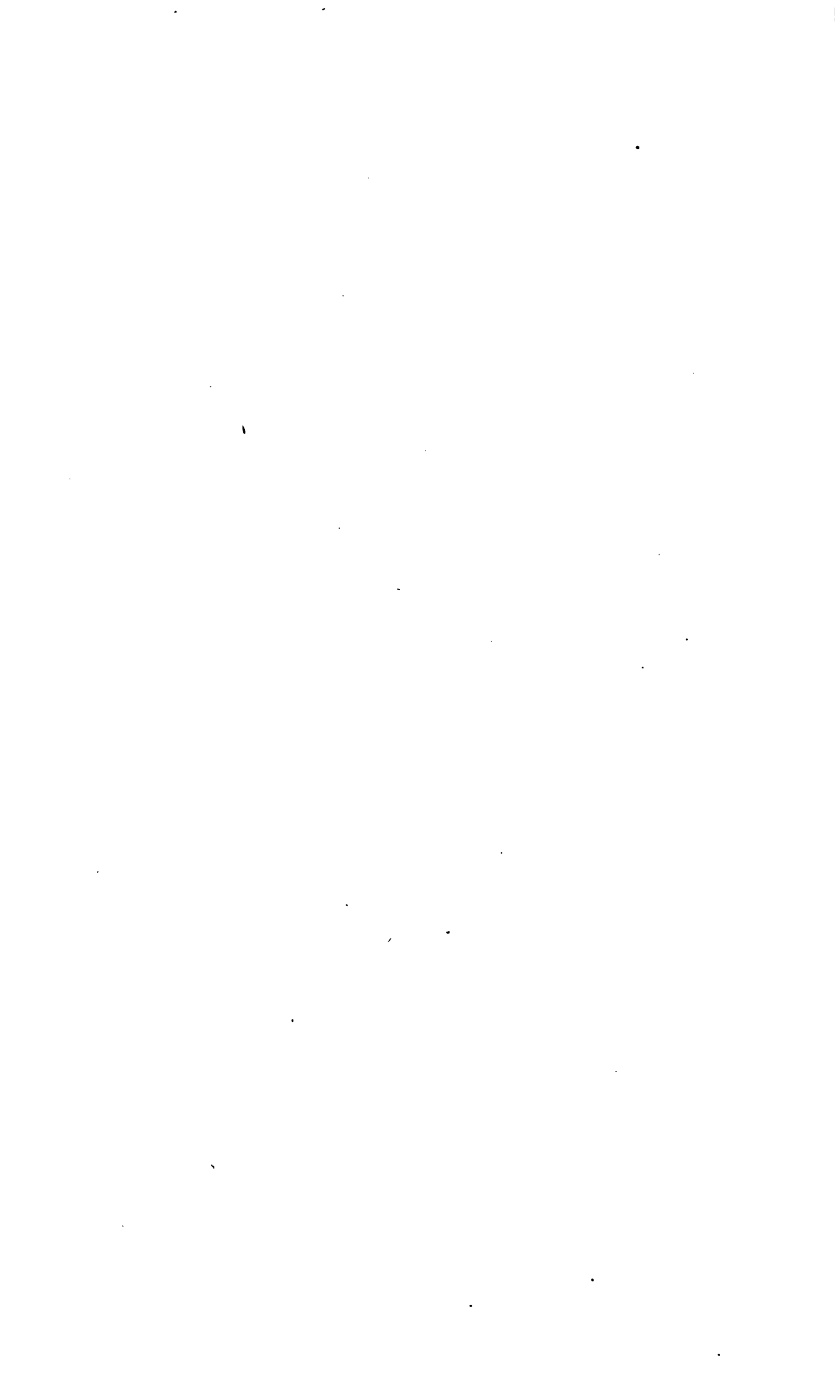
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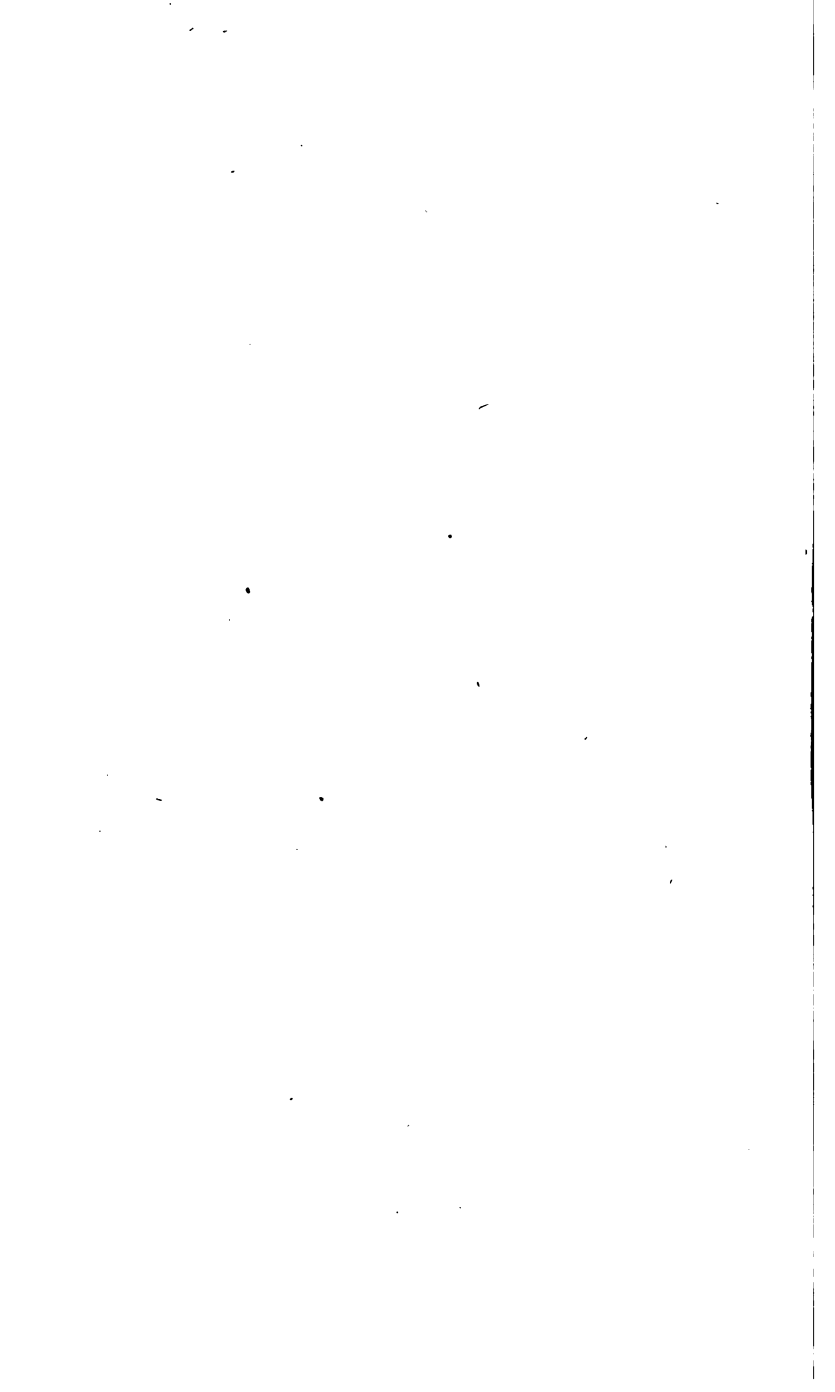
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# JAMAICA PLANTERSHIP.

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BY BENJAMIN M'MAHON,  
EIGHTEEN YEARS EMPLOYED IN THE PLANTING LINE IN  
THAT ISLAND

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LONDON:—EFFINGHAM WILSON,  
BISHOPSGATE STREET.

1839.



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**J. Matthew, Printer, 12, Nassau Place, Commercial Road.**

A  
DESCRIPTION OF  
JAMAICA PLANTERS

VIZ.  
ATTORNEYS, OVERSEERS, AND  
BOOK-KEEPERS,

WITH  
SEVERAL INTERESTING ANECDOTES.

**Compiled by the Author,**

DURING A RESIDENCE OF EIGHTEEN YEARS  
ON TWENTY-FOUR PROPERTIES, IN THE ABOVE  
CAPACITY, SITUATED IN DIFFERENT PARTS OF  
THE ISLAND.



## PREFACE.

Thrice have I taken up my pen, and as often have I laid it down, not knowing in what way I could best account to my readers for the introduction of the following pages to their notice. As a Planter by profession, it may very fairly be asked, why I should have obtruded upon the public a narrative so replete with charges against my professional brethren, and so calculated to brand with infamy the names of so many individuals entrusted with the administration of affairs in our West Indian Colonies. My reasons are the following, and they are as simple and as unvarnished as the narrative itself.

FIRST.—As a friend of civil and religious liberty, I abhor slavery in my very

Ms. A. 9. 28. 32. A. 7. A.

soul: knowing, as I do, that no man has a just right to deprive his fellow-man of his property, of his limbs, or of his life, except for some crime against society.

SECONDLY.—I regard slavery in all its forms, and under all the modifications it has assumed, as calculated to deprive its victims of those habits and energies, which are necessary to effective and beneficial labour.

THIRDLY.—I am anxious to expose the treachery, the torture, and the tyranny, practised by the overseers and attorneys of Jamaica, towards the slaves, and even in many instances towards the Book-keepers, by such a succinct detail of facts as my experience and observations for the last eighteen years may enable me to supply. .

FOURTHLY.—I wish to shew to the public why it is, that men, who have not

scorned to sacrifice their own honor, and who have not hesitated to risk the property and the lives of others, are the men who have almost exclusively been promoted to the highest offices, and to the most lucrative employments in our Colonies.

FIFTHLY.—I am anxious to lay before my readers some brief notices of the opposition made to the ministers of the Gospel, together with the destruction of their property, and the persecution of their congregations.

SIXTHLY.—I wish to call the attention of the Public generally to the profligate conduct of some of the Special Magistrates, who notwithstanding their appointment under the TWENTY MILLION ACT, under the influence of the Attornies and Overseers, became the instruments, of the vilest persecution to the Apprentices.

SEVENTHLY.—I cannot satisfy my own

conscience without making an exposure of the cruel fraud and treachery almost universally practised by colonial executors, towards the defenceless orphans committed to their care.

AND EIGHTLY,—I wish to submit to the absentee proprietor some remarks upon the nature and cultivation of the soil, upon the manner in which their properties may be most effectually managed, upon the plan of treatment which should now be adopted towards the emancipated negroes, and upon the circumstances under which European emigration to the colonies may be honorably and profitably encouraged,—remarks which are the result of my own experience and observation, and which, I flatter myself, it will be the interest of every absentee proprietor to peruse for himself.

I am quite aware that, in the following

narrative, the tone of remark into which at times I have been led, is calculated rather to make me enemies than friends—I had however no other course to pursue. To have divested it of its thrilling and horrible details, would have been to have shorn it of all its pretensions to truth. Many and painful have been the struggles between inclination and duty, whilst compiling the following pages. The recollection of intimacies, or perhaps of former acts of kindness, sometimes almost induced me to suppress facts, which, in my own conscience, I was convinced the public ought to know. But this temptation, I thank God, I have been enabled to overcome: No man has been spared because he was my friend, nor has any one been treated with undue severity on account of any personal injuries I may have sustained at his hands. Whenever I have met with a



tyrant, whether he were friend or foe, I have always felt as though the great black devil had crossed my path, and that I was bound as the friend of liberty and humanity notwithstanding the guise he wore, to exhibit his cloven hoof, and to hold up his delinquencies to public execration.

I entreat my readers generally, but more especially the absentee proprietor to do me the favor of perusing the whole narrative. It is an accumulation of facts, and upon that accumulative evidence, I wish to rest my case. Instances of extreme cruelty may be selected, which will serve to expose the odiousness of the system upon which the legislature has now placed its final veto ; but the narrative must be read as a whole, if my readers would form an adequate conception of the total unfitness of the old Planters to manage the estates in the

Colonies under their present altered circumstances. The tiger from the jungle, may be tamed, but it is a matter of rare occurrence: it is far more probable, that he will retain his native ferociousness, though confined to his cage. But what cage is sufficiently strong to restrain these human tigers from the exercise of the brutality which has been sucked in with their mothers milk? Public opinion is a bugbear, and legislative enactments but the gossamer playing in the wind. Cruelty and oppression must ooze out, so long as a pore in their bodies remains open. THE SALVATION OF THE COLONIES DEPENDS UPON THE DESTRUCTION OF THAT CONTROL WHICH THEY AT PRESENT EXERCISE OVER THE EMANCIPATED NEGROES. NEVER CAN THE RESOURCES OF THE BRITISH WEST INDIAN COLONIES BE FAIRLY BROUGHT OUT, UNTIL

viii.

**THE WHOLE RACE OF THE PLANTERS ARE  
SUPERSEDED BY A NEW ONE.**

**B. M'MAHON.**

**London Dec. 1838.**

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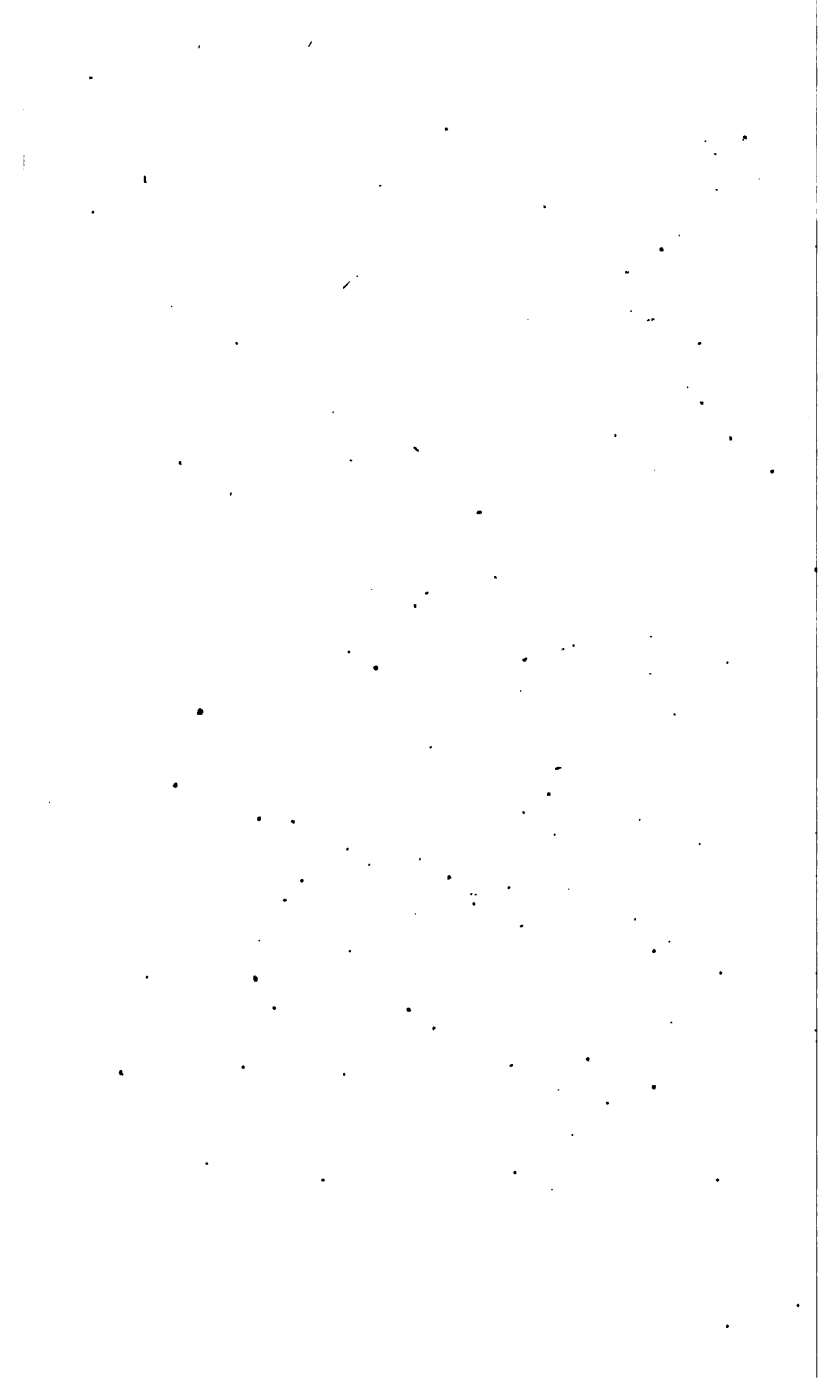
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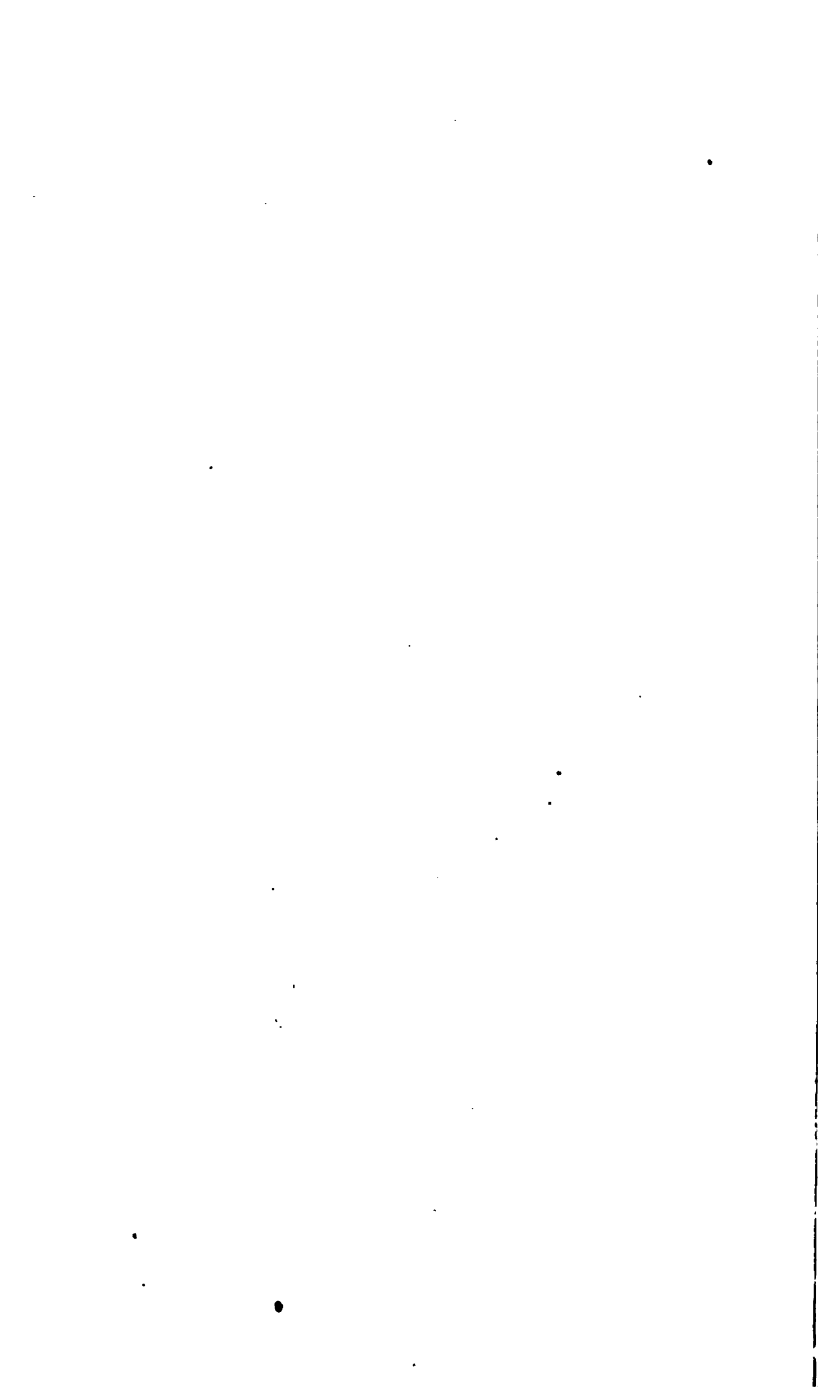
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# **NARRATIVE.**

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## NARRATIVE.

&c. &c.

On the 28th of July in the year 1818 I left my native country, Ireland, as a volunteer in the patriot service of the Columbian army, for the purpose of assisting in the liberation of the South Americans from the Spanish yoke. We sailed for the island of Margueritta.

During our passage the most remarkable thing that occurred was the frequency of petty quarrels amongst the officers, which invariably led to a duel. There were no less than fifteen duels fought on board the ship during the two months' passage; but, strange to say, only one person was wounded, and that in the heel—the motion of the vessel, perhaps, prevented them from taking good aim. These duels arose out

of the most foolish and childish disputes, generally through gambling transactions. Towards the end of the voyage the captain put a stop to this altogether, because, although they missed one another, yet they constantly hit the rigging and cut it up. We had no quarrels amongst the men.

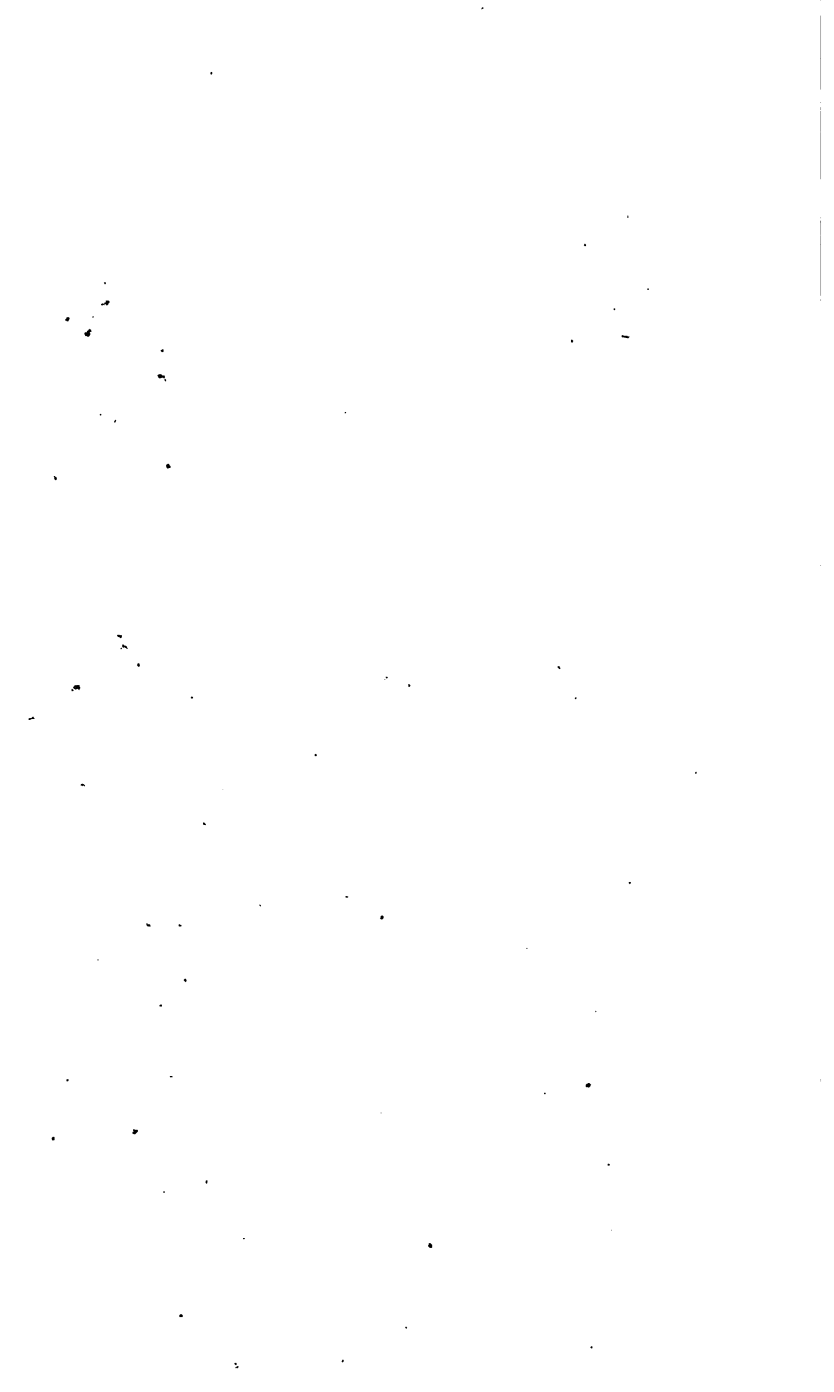
We arrived in the harbour of Juan Grego, in the island of Margueritta, on the 28th of September. It was well we did not arrive a day earlier, as there were seven of the Spanish line cruising on that coast, by whom to a certainty we should have been made prisoners, although we had been entered, at the Custom-house in Dublin, as passengers bound to Trinidad. We remained in Margueritta drilling the men, and preparing them for active service, until March, 1819.

It is not my intention, however, to enter into

details of what I went through in South America. It will be sufficient to state, that we travelled between four and five hundred miles into the interior, and met with opposition from the Spanish troops at almost every place; but it was very easily overcome, in consequence of the rank cowardice of our opponents. In fact, we did not lose a single man in warfare, but two, who lagged behind and were taken prisoners, were murdered in cold blood in the most barbarous manner—and we lost several in our march, from fatigue and thirst. About the month of June, the patriot army had been so successful, that the Spanish troops were altogether disbanded and withdrawn, and the flag of liberty was hoisted in every part of Venezuela. At the end of this campaign we were so dissatisfied with our treatment by the commanders, that many of us threw up our engagements, and became scattered about. I, together with about 200 others, determined to go to the West

Indies ; and we sailed for Jamaica in the beginning of June. I must mention that, while I was in Margueritta, I had an opportunity of seeing nearly all the inhabitants who had formerly been slaves, and who had only been made free a few months before I got there. I believe I can safely say, that I never saw one, either man or woman, that had not their bodies covered with scars,—their faces, necks, arms, legs and back, were all marked with cuts crossing each other. My ignorance of the nature of slavery in those days, left me entirely at a loss to know how all the black inhabitants could have received such horrible wounds ; and the truth never struck me, till after I had been a little time in Jamaica. The people about forty years old were grey-headed, emaciated, worn-down and often deformed, occasioned by the barbarous cruelty of the inhuman Spaniards, calling themselves Christians.

## **PLANTERSHIP.**



## PLANTING.

## BLOXBURGH ESTATE

On my arrival in Jamaica, a gentleman named Burke who kept a druggist's shop in Kingston, got me a berth in the planting line. I was employed at Bloxburgh Coffee Plantation, in the Port Royal Mountains: there were nearly 300 slaves upon it. The first morning I went to the field I was accompanied by another bookkeeper. I observed an extensive gang weeding young coffee, and two ferocious looking fellows, with long whips, well tarred, walking from right to left behind the gang, who were almost naked. These two men were the drivers. Occasionally they flogged all hands to make them work faster, and if any one dared to put up his hand to stop the lash, woe betide him. He was sure to be taken out and stretched on the ground, and there flogged without mercy.



Several of the slaves had iron bands about their necks, and were chained together in pairs with long chains, and were made to work in this way from morning till night. I was not long in detecting the folly as well as cruelty of this system, because those that were in irons, although quite unable to make use of their proper strength, were compelled to work equal to those that had free use of their limbs, and any one may see that, in this way, although the poor creatures that were loaded with irons, were compelled to work beyond their strength, those that had no chains on did less work than they might. Yet this plan was pursued to the very end of slavery. The cries and groans of these persecuted people were so heart-rending, and so sickened me with the horrible scene of cruelty, that I could not refrain from expressing what was gushing at my heart. I observed to the book-keeper, that if I had a thousand men such as I had left behind me in South America, I would hang every rascal who carried

a whip to mangle the flesh of his fellow-creatures or the monster who gave such directions. My observations at this time only occasioned a laugh I was at the same time full of spirit of liberty even to a dangerous degree, but as I was young then, the planters did not much mind what I said about slavery and cruelty, but attributed it to my want of experience. After some time had passed, my feelings became a good deal blunted by seeing these things so often, and I could not help myself, being poor and unprotected, and my remarks never did any good.

My usual routine of duty on Bloxburgh, was to rise every morning at or before four o'clock A. M. and go straight to the field, and call the list of the slaves in the gang by the light of a torch; and if any one was absent when his name was called, a most unmerciful flogging was his portion. If he happened to have on clean clothes, although they might be only rags he was sure to

, be laid down in the filthiest place, the driver  
, could find, and there receive his flogging so as  
, to create a laugh, this was done especially to wo-  
, men, and was the general practice through  
, Jamaica.

Although the whip was employed on Bloxburgh from daylight to dusk, and was combined with collars, chains, dungeons, and heavy labour, &c. yet I believe there was not a property in Port Royal Mountains, or perhaps in all Jamaica, at that time, that was managed with less severity than Bloxburgh; of this, every one of the slaves was fully sensible, and will remember it to this day. The overseer, Henry P. Roberts was really a good man, and detested the brutal practices of slavery as much as any man, but he was obliged to go with the stream, and to wink at the cruelties practised by the drivers; so that although he carried on his professional duties according to the general rules laid down, he was considered by his

neighbours unfit to have charge of a gang of slaves, on account of his meekness, and it is my firm belief, he could not have obtained a situation any where else in the parish.

The proprietor of Bloxburgh. Mr. T. P. Kellerman, was also a kind hearted and good natured man, but at last he became intimate with a monster in human shape, Mr. Charles Austin, who owned a small property in the neighbourhood. By Austin's seductive and treacherous arts, Kellerman, was at last utterly ruined. He formed a connexion with one of Austin's daughters in the island fashion and was entirely ruled by Austin's villanous advice. From this time, by gambling, cock-fighting, and horse-racing, Kellerman, involved his fine property deeper and deeper in the rapacious jaws of a mortgagee—his disappointment soured his temper—his mild policy was changed for persecution, and, under the influence of Charles Austin and his locust brood, he became as great a tyrant as his neigh-

bours- Mr. Roberts found himself unable to give satisfaction under the inhuman system recommended by Austin, and he was therefore necessitated to throw up his situation, and leave the country. He afterwards returned to the island and lived in Kingston as an honest and upright man for several years, but at length died bearing with him the prayers and good wishes of all good men.

Roberts was succeeded by one Daniel Wait, who was the very opposite of his predecessor; he was crafty and cruel—a man that had no feeling for any human being but himself—his orders were announced like a tempest sending every reed weeping to the ground. I could not put up with his tyrannical harshness, and ridiculed the idea of submitting to such barbarous imposition. But Mr. Kellerman gave advice saying, that if “ I did not do exactly as directed by the Overseer, I would have to walk the country as a vagrant, and become a nuisance to my

colour.' At this time I was reduced in circumstances, friendless, in a strange country, and almost heart-broken to think of being compelled to adopt the horrible creed of a Planter and to abandon that independence which was natural to me. It was hard to submit, though destruction stared me in the face. In those days no man could succeed in the Planting line, but one whose heart was as hard adamant; he must have no pity for the negro, and the lamentations of the hungry. The groans of the half-murdered victims must be unheeded. To force labour, and keep up subordination by the terrors of the lash, the dungeon, and the stocks, was all that was looked for. Such poor creatures as were accused of offences ever so venial, had iron collars put upon their necks—were worked under the lash of the driver from morning till night during the seven days of the week—at night made to sleep in the stocks, and fed on nothing but raw corn—were only allowed six hours sleep, and were then dragged out again.

and sent to the field of slaughter. If a negro called upon the name of his God, or offered up his prayers in those days, he would be flogged; and if a book-keeper did so, he might certainly reckon on his discharge.

About the 20th of June 1821, Doctor Craig, who was the medical man practising in that part of the country, accused Mr. Levy, the proprietor of a small place, called Phillips Valley, of having buried a negro clandestinely, who met with his death by poison. The circumstances as I heard them, were as follows: "The man often came to the hospital complaining of sickness. Mr. Levy said it was nothing but skulking, and on this occasion said he would cure him of it, and for this purpose he gave him six grains of tarter emetic which brought on excessive retching for several hours, until he died." It is likely Mr. Levy did not mean to destroy the man, but by giving him an extra dose of a powerful medicine, he clearly caused his death

which deserved to be noticed. Dr. Craig arrived at the place shortly after the man's death, and inserted a note in the hospital book, that the man had died from an over-dose of tartar emetic. Immediately on this being done, Mr. Levy discharged Craig from attendance on Phillip's Valley. Craig then wrote to the authorities in Kingston, stating the particulars of the man's death. An inquest was ordered, and was held three weeks afterwards. I accompanied the doctor to the place. On entering he was ordered out by Mr. Levy, until called for; and, on his refusing, the coroner ordered him to be withdrawn. When the jurors were sworn, I observed them all laughing and shaking their heads at each other, as if in ridicule of their oaths; and it appeared to me, that their oath, only served as a cloak to their abominable designs. The coroner, Mr. Charles, Austin, was a particular friend of Mr. Levy, and he, of course, took care to have every thing his own way. Craig was constantly interrupted,



when he tried to get out the truth from the witnesses by cross-examination ; and whenever he attempted to make any explanations himself, it caused a terrible uproar :—it was easy to see that they did not desire to hear the truth, but just to smother up the case. After going through this sham investigation, the jury returned a verdict according to custom,—“ Died by the visitation of God.” A few weeks after this, Craig was discharged from the practice of every estate in the district ; and, in order to crush him still more, Mr. Levy sued him for defamation of character, and obtained a verdict, from a jury of planters like himself, of “ one thousand pounds,” when poor Craig had not one thousand pence. The jury were quite exasperated at the idea of any white man daring to expose another, merely for being the cause of the death of a common negro. Craig was entirely ruined by this matter, and died not long after.

Craig's practice was afterwards given to Dr.

Palmer, who had long been practising in the adjoining district. He attended upon Bloxburgh. I remember one day, when he visited, there were twelve or thirteen people sick in that house ;—he prescribed, at full length; for every one of them. After he had gone, the overseer, Wait and myself, went to the hospital; and when Wait looked at the book, and saw that the people, instead of being ordered out, were all ordered medicine and nourishment, he got into a rage, stamped and swore, and called out, “ You worthless skulking ——s and brutes, out with you ; the doctor has ordered you all out, and if you don’t be off, I will cut your livers out.” The poor people refused, saying, “ Busha, me no able, and the doctor say me quite sick, and for have physic.” Wait sent for the driver to enforce his orders; he began cutting and slashing, and soon cleared the hot-house ;—he then ran after them, flogging, knocking them down, and tumbling them into the susumber bushes, full of thorns. Such a brutal scene I had never before

witnessed—the yells and screams of the poor creatures, as they tried to crawl out of the reach of their tormentor, were shocking to the ears of any but a callous hearted planter. Several of them were afterwards brought back to the hospital in a dangerous state; and two of them, a man and a woman, soon after died. On the occasion of their being buried, there was sad wailing and lamentation. The people called out, “Dis is the way Busha kill me, oh!—if massa no drive away Mr. Wait, he will kill we all same fashion. Poor neger, oh! we flesh belong to buckra, aud no more; we bones belong to we self.” These, and many other remarks, were called forth by the loss of their destroyed relations and friends. I afterwards found that this was a common mode of discipline amongst the planters, to keep the hot-house clear. About this time, I was very much persecuted by Mr. Wait, as it appeared I stood in the way of his gratifying his inclination with regard to a par-

ticular woman on the estate, which led to her being very much ill-treated. He did all in his power to make me discharge myself, and my life became a torment to me. I wrote to Mr. French, a surveyor, who had promised to befriend me, and requested him to procure me a berth elsewhere, stating my reason. In my letter I made some strong reflections on Mr. Charles Austin. It so happened, that the man who carried my letter to the post-office was met by Austin, and he took the letter from him, and opened it. He then wrote to my employer, Mr. Kellerman, declaring that he would prosecute me for defamation of character, in the same way Levy had done by Craig. When I was informed of all this, and knowing that, as a poor man, I could get no satisfaction for the opening of my letter, I thought it best to discharge myself at once.

Having no horse, I was obliged to walk all

the way to Spanish town, thirty miles, and the next day I went to St. Thomas-in-the-Vale, about seventeen miles in the interior;—there I met with Mr. French, who procured me a situation as book-keeper on

### Stirling Castle Estate.

The overseer of this estate was named Sharkey—he was a *shark* by nature; his vehement barbarity to the negroes was most awful. I could fill a volume with the accounts of his cruelties. Every morning daylight was ushered in with the most terrible floggings, all arising out of the most frivolous complaints, chiefly about night-watchmen. I was induced to ask the other book-keeper if it was customary to mangle the flesh of the labourers every morning in this manner, as a part of the discipline of the estate,—as, if it was, I could never hold the situation.

The book-keeper (Thomas Lally) told me I was a fool to notice the overseer's actions—if he were to kill, burn, and destroy the people, I should say nothing about it ; and if the overseer had the slightest idea of my observations, he would instantly discharge me, and leave me unable to get another berth.

My usual employment was first to go to the corn-store, long before day-light, with the night watchmen, those who had been in the stocks all night, and the hot-house people, and to shell a barrel of corn ; after that I had to go to the field, and call the list by the light of a burning-stick, and every one not present was of course laid down and flogged by the driver. I had then to go to the cattle-pens, to see the cattle turned out, by which time it began to be day-light. I then returned home, fed the small stock, made out my return of the distribution of the gangs, then to breakfast, and immediately after

it I went to superintend the gang in the field and dare not go home out of it in the heaviest rain that ever fell. One morning, as I was coming from the field, I observed a very sickly looking man named Tom dragged out of the hospital by the driver, under Sharkey's orders, to be sent to the field—the man was so weak that he could hardly walk: he was proceeding slowly down the hill, when Sharkey ran after him, and gave him a dreadful blow on the back;—the poor creature immediately threw up blood, was taken back to the hospital, and, a few days afterwards, was a corpse. He was buried without the slightest notice being taken of the cause of his death. The slaves upon this estate, as might be expected, were in a miserable state of debility, and the annual decrease of their numbers was perfectly frightful.

I lived only twenty-eight days upon Stirling castle, when I discharged myself. During the time

I lived there, the only sleep I ever got was in the cattle-pens, or in the field before day-light; as to my bedchamber, it was so infested with bugs, as to bid defiance to rest or sleep. During the time I was on Stirling Castle, I several times saw the people flogged severely, only for laughing. One day I left my own gang to go and speak to Lally, who was superintending the great gang; he remarked, that he heard some of the young people in my gang laughing and tittering, and said, stop till I catch any of my people doing the same, and I will show you how I will treat them. While I was standing talking to him, a woman, who was running across the cane-holes with a basket of manure on her head, fell flat on her face; several of the people burst out a laughing at her, when the book-keeper called out to the driver to lay down three of them who had giggled the loudest, and they immediately received a severe flogging. Lally said it was disrespectful to him to laugh in his presence.



The slaves were never allowed more than four or five hours' rest every night, even out of crop. One-fourth of the men were employed watching every night, over different parts of the property; and if the overseer got annoyed, he would make one half of the gang keep watch, so that they only got one night's rest out of two—being obliged to work the whole day besides. About three in the morning, the driver's whip cracked for all hands to turn out, when they had to do any odd jobs about the works by moon-light or torch-light, in the corn-store, or such places. Not a morning ever passed without the most dreadful punishments. The labourer, to avoid punishment, used to go to the field soon after midnight, and sleep on the ground in the mud or on the wet grass, waiting for daylight to commence work—this for fear of over-sleeping himself, and not being present when the list was called. If one did happen to sleep in his house till day-light, he might make up his mind

to run away, or meet his certain fate in the shape of a severe scourging. The reader may think such cruelty was confined to this estate, but I must tell him the practice was general on every estate, whether leniently or severely managed—it was a standing rule with all planters—the morning fare was nothing but the whip.

If a book-keeper was not in the field before day-light, he would be sure of his discharge, if seen by the overseer. I have often run nearly naked to the field, under the heavy tropical dew, with my clothes in my hand, so as to escape being seen by the overseer, and then dressed myself under cover of the canes, amongst the negroes.

### Chareilton Estate.

I was next employed on Chareilton estate, about three miles from Stirling Castle. A few days

afterwards I got leave to go to Stirling Castle, to bring away my clothes; on entering the yard, I met Mr. Sharkey, who demanded, in an imperious tone, why I left him so abruptly? I replied, —“ Mr. Sharkey, consult your own feelings, if you have any, they can best tell you: I would not live under any man who practised spilling the blood of his fellow-creatures as deliberately as a swine butcher.”—He was ever afterwards my enemy, wherever his influence could extend.

Mr. M'Kenzie was overseer of Chareilton. He was not like Sharkey—he carried on the routine duties of the estate according to general custom, but was by no means cruel to the negroes. In fact, he was one of the most lenient in the whole quarter; but he treated the book-keepers very badly, neglected their comforts, and half-starved them. He lived in a very low, mean, and disgusting way himself, and was very filthy. But the worst thing about him was his shocking

immorality. He was actually living with two sisters at one and the same time, and in the same apartment.

In the month of October, I was lining cane holes—rain fell every day, and I had to continue at work all day in my wet clothes. At the end of the month I was seized with fever, and confined to my bed. Here I was entirely neglected, both as to attendance and nourishment. I got worse rapidly, and the doctor despaired of me, but still I got no more attendance. I had on three blisters at once, and an old woman, the hot-house doctress, was sent to dress them. She had not a spark of feeling, and tore them off my body as if I had been a wild beast: I begged and prayed her to be a little more gentle, but it was of no use. I mention these things to shew what a poor book-keeper has to go through; and such is, or rather was, the general treatment of book-keepers throughout the island. When I

recovered a little, I went to the house of a brown gentleman, named Cheese, for change of air, and shall never forget the kindness and humanity I experienced from him and his amiable mother. Shortly after my return to the estate, when I had recovered, a young man arrived from England, sent out on purpose to act as book-keeper on Chareilton. I was therefore removed to

### Palm Estate.

Colin Graham Simpson was the overseer. He was mean and miserly in his habits—not violent in his temper, but terribly vindictive;—if once he took a dislike, he never stopped till he destroyed his victim, if he were able. He sent me to the boiling-house, as the mill was then about, and after a few days he told me that the two head-boilers were most rebellious rascals, and he therefore ordered me to keep a

sharp look out after them, and try to catch them in fault. I accordingly watched them closely, but never detected any thing wrong,—in fact, they were two of the best men on the place. But I soon found that Simpson was determined on the destruction of these men, and merely wanted to make me the instrument of his vengeance. Every night at supper he demanded if I had found nothing against them yet, and my constant reply was, “No, sir, nothing of harm as yet.” This reply made him growl like a disappointed bear. At length, he seemed determined to bring matters to a crisis, and he took me aside, and said, “Young man, consider, you have no home, no friends, and are far from your country and family, therefore, reflect on it. You are aware that, in the planting line, no favour or friendship can be expected if a book-keeper disagrees with his overseer. It is his duty to assist the overseer in every plan he lays down—to do as he does—

and say as he says ; by such conduct alone can he expect to succeed, and therefore I now give you my last trial :—you will therefore understand that, right or wrong, your efforts must be directed to assist me in accomplishing the object of my determination. It is my intention to have the two boilermen, old Quamin and William Thomas, transported off the island. They complained against me to the attorney, and I am determined to bring them to their bearings. I have already reported them as dangerous characters. If you have any wish to secure my friendship, now is your time. I have sufficient interest to procure you an overseer's appointment in less than six months. Take your time with the black rascals—give them rope and they will hang themselves—let them have plenty of opportunities to steal sugar or any thing else that can lead to their being shipped off—the damned laws will not allow us to hang the rascals for such things now. But

your evidence against them, together with mine. will be enough to do their business."

After this lesson, I was allowed to remain at rest for nearly a month, during which, every thing was done to make me comfortable—nothing in fact was too good for me. I was introduced to his acquaintance in the most flattering manner, and every sort of attention was paid to me. It was, however, all in vain, for I could never think of perjuring myself for the purpose of destroying two innocent and defenceless fellow-creatures. I dreaded the day when Simpson should break silence about it—at last it came. It was at dinner one day, when Simpson said, "Well, Mr. M'Mahon, I suppose by this time you know as well as I do of the villany of those notorious rascals, and we will now bring them to their doom—they have long laboured for it. I am confident you must know enough to con-



vict them,—speak up, Mr. M'Mahon, my friend, in a manly manner.” I thanked him for his directions, and then told him, in plain terms, that I had watched the men closely day and night, and had never detected them in any fault, and was convinced they were as honest and correct in their conduct as any men in the parish, and that I should decline in future having to do with any plans for the destruction of innocent men. Simpson clenched his teeth together with a ferocious grin, and said, “I’ll make you trip your heels for this, young man.” He did not, however, discharge me then—perhaps he was afraid of the story getting wind, but he resorted to every sort of persecution to make me discharge myself. I will not stop to tell all his dirty acts of tyranny, but must observe that, in trying to injure me, he deprived the property of fully ten puncheons of rum, by destroying the sweets, and not allowing me to

be supplied with fire-wood. On one occasion, when I asked him for wood for the still-house, he replied, "Go sir, and get a large green cotton tree, and drag it to the still-house." As he said this to insult and ridicule me, I replied, "If you allow me the benefit of a spell of steers and a cart, I can go to the pasture and bring home a load of the bones of the cattle you have killed this crop, and they will do for me for a few days' burning." He shook his head, and ordered me out of the house, muttering through his clenched teeth, "I will crush you to the earth yet."

I will give one anecdote about Simpson, which will show his mode of management. Old Quamin, the head-boiler, was taken very sick, and confined to his bed. While he was away from the boiling-house, Simpson found fault with the quality of the sugar, and sent for old Quamin to be brought to the boiling-house,

sick as he was, to superintend and give directions. The old man was not able to move about, but sat down and gave his orders. After being at this a couple of days, Simpson ordered him to take entire charge. At this time, Simpson was constantly finding fault, although there was no fault to be found; and on the third day of Quamin resuming his duties, Simpson came down immediately after breakfast, and the moment he entered, began to curse and swear, and called to me to stand at one door while he guarded the other. He then called the boatswain of the yard, to punish all hands in the boiling-house:—the first laid down was poor old Quamin, sick, weak, and emaciated as he was. He said, “Busha, you bring me from my house when me no able to walk, to look after the work, and me do all me can to please busha, but busha won’t be satisfied. If busha flog me, he will kill me; me no able to stand it, but busha must have him own way,

and if me dead me can't help it.' With that he was laid on the ground, and the lash came down; he cried out at first at each lash, ' Busha kill me.' " Me dead, oh," &c. but after five or six lashes he became silent, and then only shook his head in a despairing manner at each blow, but soon even that ceased, and he lay motionless as a log; the whip however still went on, and he received a dreadful punishment. I really thought he was dead; he lay without moving for a considerable time after the punishment was over, and during that time the others were successively laid down, and flogged to the satisfaction of the brutal overseer. I did not at that time think there was a man in all Jamaica that could have had the heart to flog a poor weakly old man, like Quamin. This scene, however, during crop, was several times repeated.

Simpson, by sneaking into my room, during my absence, got a sight of a letter I was writing

to my brother, in which I stated, that to the great mortification of my feelings, I was a planter, and compelled to view daily the most brutal tyranny and treachery that was ever exercised under the reign of the monster Caligula, &c. This expression was repeated through the neighbourhood, and the doors of planters were shut against me. I then discharged myself from Palm, and for some days lived amongst the people of colour, by whom I was much respected. In a short time, a gentleman named Blake, who was a planter of a very different character from any of his neighbours,—humane, liberal and independent, procured me a berth in another part of the parish.

### Crawle Estate.

On the 20th of July, 1822, I was employed on this estate by Mr. Ralph Cocking, the over-

seer. He was a young man, very plausible and cunning, and ready to do any thing to get into favour with his employers. He was very ambitious, and ready to make any sacrifices to accomplish his aim. He was a cruel tyrant to the poor slaves; he flogged without mercy, and was unkind and unfeeling to them in every respect. The only good point I ever saw in Mr. Cocking was, that he was liberal to his book-keepers, at table.

My employment during the week was so incessant, that I had not as much time as would enable me to reckon my clothes to the washerwoman. The negroes were in a state of great debility from cruel oppressions; the only strong and active man was the driver (John Clark), a powerful and muscular fellow, whose savage barbarity over the rest was terrifying. I remember on one occasion Mr. Cocking found fault with this driver for not having forced enough of work out

of the gang, and laid him down and gave him a severe flogging, which obliged him to go to the pond, to wash off the blood. After it was over, he said, "Never mind, I don't blame busha for this; but I will know what to do—I'm not going to take lick for all the gang in this way, and I don't care what I do,—I will cut and chop away right and left." He went to the field, and took ample revenge on the poor slaves—flogging them all round till night; he wore out three different lashes on his whip; he literally cut the clothes on their backs, and slashed the arms, necks, and faces of several young females, who dared not complain: the man, in fact, worked himself up to frenzy, and I dared not interfere, or I should have had my discharge, and the slaves dared not complain, for fear of another punishment instead of redress. On the following morning, several of these unfortunate people went to the hospital with fever, and many were entirely lame and unable to walk, and although the property

lost the benefit of these people's labour for several days, yet this was good management! I saw plainly enough that this estate was ruined and could not last long, and accordingly I find that it has since been sold and broken up. Mr. Ralph Cocking is now a special magistrate, but I have had no opportunity of seeing how he has conducted himself in that capacity; from what I know of his unmerciful disposition, and his deceit and hypocrisy, I cannot think that his principles are changed, and I am sure that the negroes can never have the least confidence in him. No planter ought ever to have been made a special magistrate—they can never forget their old habits.

### Harmony Hall.

Mr. Adam Steel, the proprietor of an exten-



sive jobbing gang, induced me to leave Crawle estate, to take charge of his gang as overseer, as I had a good reputation for industry and attention to business. I accepted his offer. His gang was employed in jobbing on estates in that and the neighbouring parishes. They were a fine effective set of people, whom he had picked and selected by various crafty means. Before I had been two months in his employ, I found out that he was a dangerous character to have any dealings with—a man totally without principle, either of honesty or honour: as to humanity or morality, that was out of the question. Besides having his own property and gang, he was overseer of Byndloss estate, which enabled him to plunder on a very extensive scale. He stole timber from his neighbours' woods by moonlight, using Byndloss steers for the purpose, and in this way he built his house on Harmony Hall. He was an expert hand at converting a deed of sale into a deed of gift to

his own advantage, and there was no villainy that he was not capable of acting. Females at the age of ten and eleven fell victims to his brutal lust, and if ever he heard of any of the negro men at all interfering with any of the women he had once cast his eye upon, the cruel butchery that followed was sufficient to strike terror into their hearts.

I was present on the following occasion, and can speak from personal observation:—Steel was living in the fashion of the country, with a free woman of colour, named Miss Marshall. She owned a young brown slave girl, named Sarah, about 14 or 15 years of age, who was a great favourite of her mistress. Steel, it appeared, was constantly trying to seduce this poor creature. Miss Marshall became jealous, and vented her spleen upon the girl, and one day accused her of being impudent to her,

which, in her jealousy, she imputed to Steel's improper attentions to her, and at the same time threatened the girl that she would make Mr. Steel give her a flogging.

Steel overheard all this, and determined to revenge himself, both on the girl and Miss Marshall. He called out, "I'll take care you two shall have no more quarrels about me." He sent for the driver, John Taylor, and four able people; poor Sarah was dragged out to the terrace in front of the house; Steel took his chair out, and sat down, so that he might not be tired during the prolonged punishment he designed to inflict. The girl was stretched out, and her body laid bare. I shall never forget the sight, she was a most beautiful creature, the picture of symmetry; her skin like velvet, without a mark upon it—alas! so soon to be disfigured by the horrid lacerations of the whip. The punishment commenced at half-past four,

and was not finished till six o'clock, during which time the driver had to stop three different times to put new lashes to his whip. When first the flogging began, the girl gave the most piercing shrieks I ever heard from a human being, and continued shrieking until entirely exhausted; she then lay writhing and shuddering, giving a dreadful groan at each lash—still the horrid whip went on—she was covered with blood—her body from the shoulders to the thighs, was one frightful mass of mangled flesh. In the midst of this, I saw the suffering girl raise her head—her eyes glared wildly—she was panting, or gasping for breath—and in a broken voice scarcely audible, she cried, “Water! water! water!” Her appearance was awful—I thought she was dying—I was sick at heart—I could bear no more, and rushed into the plaintain walk to get out of sight and hearing of the murderous work. I had then counted upwards of 300 lashes. Pre-

vious to this I had applied to Steel to stop the punishment, but he told me to go and mind my own business, as I had nothing to do with the quarrels between Miss Marshall's people and himself. Miss Marshall herself, three times during the punishment, went and entreated him not to murder the poor girl; but it was of no use, he swore the most dreadful oaths, and made use of the foulest and most obscene language his tongue could utter. He did not care if she died on the spot. At last Miss Marshall, in a distracted state, ran to the back part of the house into the plaine walk, wringing her hands, and calling out, "Mr. Steel has murdered my poor slave—poor Sarah's killed." Steel at length was satisfied. He had glutted his vengeance on his helpless victim—she was carried away, and I saw no more of her, I left Steel's employ soon after, and the next time I visited the parish, on inquiring after poor Sarah, I learned that, shortly after I left the

place, poor Sarah was laid in a cold grave. This murder took place close to the residence of two magistrates, but, as they were perhaps doing quite as bad themselves, no notice was taken of this. I could repeat facts without end of the shocking conduct of Adam Steel, but what I have said will be enough to show his general character; he has gone to his account before his God, and a terrible account it must be. I must not forget to mention, that while I was following Steel's gang, I had once to take them to a job on St. Clairs' plantation, St. John's, the property of Mr. William Moor. Before starting, the driver, John Taylor, told me I should see negroes in such a state as I had never seen before. I found his words true. There were about twenty of them, thirteen of whom were in chains. If a gentleman unacquainted with slavery had suddenly met these people, I am sure, if he survived the shock, he would never forget it, if he lived for a thousand

years. They were not black like negroes, but yellow, from constant confinement and monstrous persecution. They looked more like phantoms than human beings; the rags with which they were covered could not be distinguished from their skin, nor from the ground on which they were working. They were wretchedly meagre, and ghastly enough to make any Christian run away at the sight of them. Yet these wretched creatures did more work than I could have thought possible. Every one of them was covered from head to foot with cuts and scars—even their faces had not been spared from the lash.

While, working under the rays of a broiling sun, the iron collars on their necks got so hot as to burn their skin, which caused them intolerable pain, and kept them constantly wailing and moaning: All day they were making their sad lamentations, in the most piteous tones, the

burden of their heart-rending song being their miserable condition. "Poor nega da dead we hungry—poor nega cut up worsa than cow—buckra have pity 'pon dum ting, but him kill poor nega—we flesh belongs only to whip, and we blood belongs to the ground—whip when we complain of hungry—whip when we no get to field before day—whip when we tired—whip when we look cross—whip when we laugh—whip when we complain of busha to massa—whip when we complain of book-keeper to busha—whip when we go to hot-house sick—whip every Monday for dem have sore foot—Buckragive poor nega whip for medicine—whip for make him strong at work—whip for make him weak to go to hot-house—whip to make him leave hot-house and go to work and whip to make him work more than him 'trenchth able. Buckra make whip contradiction, same like the punch him drink, when him take rum for make strong—wata for make weak—limes for make



sour. and sugar for make sweet. Buckra make whip do every ting, but make life, and that it no able to do, but it make plenty dead. We pray to God to take poor nega, before Buckra kill him done." *This is a correct picture of the general state of negro feeling on the subject of slavery.*

There was another jobbing gang working at the same time at St. Clair's belonging to Mr. M'Innes, which was under the charge of Mr. Edbury. Of this latter person, I must make some mention :—Soon after I met with him, he set up a provision store, where he was well supported by the planters; along with this he was appointed supervisor of Rodney Hall workhouse, which, under his management, acquired the reputation of being the very severest in the island. He is said to have made large sums of money by purchasing rotten provisions for the slaves, and charging the public the highest price; but as compensation for this, he managed to have seldom less than one inquest, and sometimes

three, every week, on the unfortunate slaves who were put under his discipline for punishment;—in fact, the establishment almost required the entire services of a coroner, so frightful was the mortality. The most athletic negro, of the strongest constitution, could not long survive the barbarous discipline of Rodney Hall work-house. Mr, Edbury has made a rapid fortune, and he has gained the applause of tyrants; but he can never enjoy the esteem of the orphans and widows of the starved, mangled, and murdered victims who have been borne out of the institution under his control.

### Worthy Park.

On leaving the employ of Adam Steel, I received a letter of recommendation to Mr. John Blair, then residing at Spring Vale, who had just received the attorneyship of Worthy Park. On

my first arrival at Spring Vale, he was from home but as he was expected in the afternoon, I waited his return and walked about. As I passed a field where the negroes were cutting canes on the road side, I observed that a great number of them had handkerchiefs tied round their loins, as a substitute for trowsers, rendered necessary by the sore and raw state of their bodies, from severe floggings. I was curious enough to call the driver, and ask him the reason. He replied " Sir, so you see us now, so we stand all the year round. Don't you know our massa? He is no boy—he don't play with we?" When I got to the works, I stopped there for a while, and during that short time I saw the book-keeper come out of the still-house, and lay down every one of the dry trash and green trash carriers (all women), and the stoker, and flog them all most unmercifully. The book-keeper's name was Jackson, and he told me he was authorised, and in fact compelled to act in this manner, by Mr.

Blair. After this, I walked into the boiling-house, and there saw three men out of the four boilermen, with handkerchiefs round their bodies, instead of trowsers, and all besmeared with blood. I had some conversation with them, as no book-keeper was present, and they told me, they were obliged to wet the handkerchiefs frequently, to keep them from adhering to, and drying in, their raw and inflamed flesh, which always gave intolerable pain.

At the stoke hole I observed one man who was feeding the fire, and was chained by the neck to a 56lb. weight.

I had some conversation afterwards with Mr. Rutledge, a book-keeper, who had just discharged himself. He remarked that if Blair had not the satisfaction of mangling the flesh of ten or a dozen negroes before breakfast every morning, his countenance would be black and threatening;

but, on the contrary, after indulging in this morning's amusement, he would be cheerful and pleasant. Mr. Grant, a book-keeper on Worthy Park, repeated the same thing, and although he had seen enough as a midshipman in the navy, he shuddered at the deliberate cruelty of Mr. John Blair.

I am told that Mr. Blair is now an altered man—that he is mild and quiet; but whether this comes from a change of heart, or only a change of policy, must rest between God and himself

When Mr. Blair came home, I waited upon him with my letter of introduction; he immediately gave me the situation of book-keeper at Worthy Park, and made me stop to dine with him. His conversation was all about estates discipline, and amongst other things I remember his saying, if the negroes were seen without wear-

ing handkerchiefs during crop time, people might well say Spring Vale was going to hell ?

I was at Worthy Park for only two weeks. During that time I was altogether in the still-house, and knew nothing of the general management. I frequently heard the whip going outside, but knew nothing of the circumstances attending the punishment.

### Ardock Pen, St. Ann's.

Mr. David Finlay, the proprietor of the above pen, wrote me, offering me the situation of overseer. I gladly accepted it. The time I remained here was the happiest in my life. Mr. Finlay was one of the best men I ever knew ; he was exceedingly kind and humane to all his slaves in every respect : they were truly happy, and conducted themselves in the most orderly and respect-

ful manner. The work went on cheerfully without the necessity of the whip, and although the place was worn out and barren, the net proceeds were comparatively very large. Yet for all this he was denounced and ridiculed by his neighbours as an old fool. The increase of the slaves on this property, from a few women, was truly remarkable. The compensation alone must have amounted to a large sum. I was induced to leave this place at the instigation of a neighbouring overseer, who was leaving the country, and recommended me to take his place, where I should get a better salary. In an evil hour I complied. Mr. Finlay was very much hurt at my leaving him, but we parted on friendly terms, and I procured an overseer to put in my place.

### Amity Hall Pen, St. Ann's.

I went to this place on the 20th of July, 1823,

Mr. James Betty, who afterwards so much disgraced himself in the case of the unfortunate Henry Williams, was executor to Mr. Ratigan. and trustee of Amity Hall. The place was left to a poor family of colour by their father, and Betty was the guardian. I had an opportunity here of witnessing the scandalous practices adopted by guardians and executors. I will just give one instance out of several acts of villany. I received orders to select twenty-four head of cattle to be sent to pasture to be fattened for sale; they were to be sent to Prosper Hall Pen, which was also under Betty's charge, and where he received a certain percentage for all the stock he provided for that pen. On the same day I was offered £18. a head for the cattle. This I communicated to Betty, but he told me to comply with his orders, and to make no observation on his mode of management, if I cared for my berth. It was evident he determined to make his profit out



of them before they were sold. When they had been at grass for a month I went to inspect them, and found them in worse condition than when I sent them, from want of water and bad grass. I again waited on Mr. Betty, and reported it to him; he got quite exasperated at my interference. The cattle were kept at pasture for a considerable time, and when sold at last, after deducting the pasturage account from the gross amount, it netted only £5. a head for the cattle that ought to have been sold for £18. each. This is the way in which the poor orphans of colour are robbed and plundered of their property, when left to the care of greedy and unprincipled planters. The poor children to whom this property belonged were kept in a state of comparative destitution, with barely sufficient clothing to cover their nakedness, or food to keep them from starving, while Mr. Betty, their father's friend, was fattening on the spoils of the property that was consigned to his charge. I am of opinion

that there are not *fifty cases* in all Jamaica better than this, under executors.

### Russell Hall Estate.

From Amity Hall I removed to Russell Hall Estate, St. Mary's; but as the severity of the discipline did not exceed the ordinary standard of cruelty, I need not go into particulars. The mill, during crop, was put about on Sunday evening, and kept going night and day till the following Sunday morning, so that the negroes had only a few hours in the middle of the day (Sunday) to procure their provisions for the following week.

### Cherry Garden Estate, St. Dorothy's

I lived on this estate for eighteen months, as

head book-keeper under Mr. Francis M' Cook, the overseer and attorney. By some Mr. M' Cook was looked upon as a great tyrant, but I cannot accuse him of any thing of the kind. He was certainly fond of keeping up steady discipline in the gang; but I never knew him to be guilty of any outrage. He was a man of strict integrity, and very upright in his dealings with every one; in fact he was particularly generous towards the slaves. He was fond of jovial company at times, and now and then would indulge in an olympic shine, similar to the Marquis of Waterford. Still Mr. M'Cook was and is a safe man for the protection of property, and the best servant by far in Mr. Bernal's employ. —If he deserved otherwise, I would say so—he was no friend of mine after I left him. I discharged myself foolishly, because I was told by a brother book-keeper that Mr. M'Cook had cast

reflections on my country men, from which I supposed I should stand no chance of promotion.

While on Cherry Garden, there was another book-keeper, named Donald Ross, who had been removed from Richmond estate, in St. Ann's, to Cherry Garden. He related to me several anecdotes about Mr. Charles Smith, the attorney of Richmond, and co-attorney of Cherry Garden. Amongst other things he told me the following. Shortly after Mr. Smith was married to Miss Hurlock, he one day ordered a little girl about eleven or twelve years of age to go to a distant part of the estate, under the pretence of taking a message to the cattle-men. He followed and overtook her on horse-back. He then alighted, called her to him, and insisted on her submitting to his brutal inclinations. The poor thing resisted, and pleaded her extreme youth. After struggling for some time, and finding himself

baffled, he savagely took his walking stick, and beat her over the head till she fell down and every time she attempted to rise he repeated the blows on her head, till he at last fairly stunned the poor child, and during the time she lay in that state he accomplished his horrible purpose! Donald Ross declared that all this he witnessed with his own eyes. He happened to be among the cattle at the time, and under cover of the bushes, had unseen been an unwilling spectator of the terrible outrage. Donald Ross was not a man of any tenderness of heart for the negro race, yet he declared that his feelings so overcame him when he heard the poor child's piercing shrieks, that it was as much as he could do to command himself, though he knew that his certain ruin would be the consequence of his interference. He spoke of the affair with the deepest horror, and entered into particulars which I cannot commit to paper. It is almost superfluous to say that the mother of the child, so far from

obtaining any redress. dare not even give utterance to a murmur.

### Exeter Estate, Vere.

I was employed on this estate by an old Irishman, named Kelly who many years before, had made a fortune and left the country, but like many others, entirely lost it in speculations; and seventeen years after leaving Jamaica, he returned to it to begin the world again as an overseer. One of the modes by which he made his fortune, was by becoming an executor on a large scale. He had imported twenty-one poor Irishmen, to act as book-keepers and tradesmen on estates. Eighteen out of these twenty-one died at various periods after their arrival, every one of whom left him their executor. Kelly told me he was confident that there were not three of

these poor fellows, who had been book-keepers, who had not met their deaths from the tyranny and oppression of the overseers they were under. Mr. Kelly was a very lenient manager, a fatherly old man to the slaves, but no person that lived in Mr. Ashley's employ dared to be otherwise: Mr. Ashley was a noble minded gentleman, who abhorred the villanous proceedings of those around him. He was well aware of the infamous conduct of planting attorneys in general; for he had been made to suffer during his own absence from the country—he was nearly ruined by them.

I was taken with a very severe fit of illness just as Mr. Ashley was on the point of promoting me to the rank of overseer; and after being three months ill, I found myself compelled to leave that part of the country.

### Osborne Estate, St. George's.

I went over to St. George's in August, 1827, and was employed as book-keeper by Edward Stirling the overseer, one of the most atrocious monsters I had yet met with. The poor slaves were in a most deplorable condition. There were not ten effective negroes on the whole estate; they were utterly disabled and worn down, by the dreadful cruelties heaped upon them by three successive brutal tyrants.

The general subject of conversation amongst the overseers in this quarter, when they assembled together, was the different modes of torture they adopted in punishing the negroes. I cannot stop to describe all that were invented, but I must mention one which I saw Stirling adopt



on several occasions. There was a young cocoa nut-tree close to the end of the piazza; a rope was passed over the top of it, and the offender, after being stripped stark naked, was tied by the wrists and hauled up till his toes just touched the ground, and in that torturing position he was lashed by the driver till Stirling gave orders to stop, which was seldom done till the victim was flayed, from the shoulders downwards. There was one young man, named Sammy, who was so frequently flogged in this manner, that the tree was generally called Sammy's tree. After one of these punishments, Sammy's back was in such a state of corruption, that he got maggots in the sores; he showed it to M'Keoy, one of the attorneys, but as usual without any effect. I must pass over the rest of the horrors I witnessed on this estate during the few weeks I lived there. One night I was keeping spell in the boiling-house and, as every thing was going on well, I was walking up and down, whistling. Stirling came

in, and said " Mr. M'Mahou, is this the way you are doing your duty? You are whistling for the amusement of the negroes"—and he forthwith discharged me for whistling.

### Agualta Vale Estate, St. Mary's.

I have but little to say about this place. I was employed by the overseer, Mr. Holworthy; and, although he did not act fairly by me, I must do him the justice to say that he was kind-hearted, honourable, and high-spirited, but he had an unfortunate, hasty, and irascible temper, which sometimes betrayed him into acts which in his cooler moments he must have regretted. In his treatment of the slaves he was strict, but generally just in his dealings with them; the only outrage I ever knew of his committing, was his keeping a woman for six months working in and out of the stocks, under a suspicion of

her having attempted to poison a book-keeper of the name of Bannister, but which I believe to have been maliciously false. I left this estate on account of a quarrel with Holworthy's concubine.

### Spring Garden Estate, St. George's.

The overseer of this estate, Mr. Gladwidge, was one of the mildest and most amiable men I ever met with ; he was deeply respected and beloved by every slave upon the place—he was in fact altogether too good to be placed in the society of planters. He was always in good humour, and there was no flogging on the estate by his orders—whatever took place in that way was by the drivers or book-keepers. His kindness and humanity to the sick was most exemplary. He was at length removed from hence to Petersfield, in St. Thomas-in-the-East,

to the mortification and regret of white and black.

Mr. Gladwidge was succeeded by Mr. Robert Grey Kirkland, a gentleman of considerable abilities, a clever planter, a strict disciplinarian, but judicious and humane in his treatment. I remember his once punishing two men for robbery ; and before flogging them he told them, "he would rather go to the store and give them out a half barrel of pork, than give them punishment, that he hated flogging, but unfortunately he had no other means of putting a stop to their misconduct."

I again fell into very bad health here, and for a long time was unable to do any thing. Three times I sent to discharge myself, as I was doing nothing for the salary I was receiving, but Mr. Kirkland, in the most honourable manner, insisted on my remaining till I could re-

cover. At last, finding I could get no better, I finally left the estate. I went down to Kingston with the intention of going to the island of Cuba, where I had very good prospects; but I was taken so ill just at the time I was about to embark, that I was obliged to forfeit my passage, and remain in the island.

### Passley Garden Estate, Portland.

On my recovery I returned to Portland, and soon afterwards received the appointment of overseer on Passley Garden estate. It was in chancery, and Mr. John Sutton Minot, an attorney-at-law in Kingston, was the receiver, and a legatee of the estate. It was a small place, but very fertile, and would have yielded a valuable income, had it been properly managed. The slaves had been exceedingly ill-treated—half starved and worn out with merci-

less flogging ; they were squalid, meagre, and miserable ; they did not receive even the trifling allowances ordered by law ; as to salt allowances, they never saw a salt-herring from new-year's day to Christmas. The consequence was they did but little effective labour, and were sadly given to theft, driven to it by sheer starvation ; they chiefly supported themselves by night-fishing, and the wild fruits in the pastures. Mr. Minot was very poor, and very capricious in his temper ; he seldom kept an overseer more than a few months, and generally left his salary unpaid on discharging him. Whilst I was there, the book-keeper discharged himself, and Mr. Minot requested me to pay him his salary. I did so, but was never repaid. Mr. Minot died intestate, and I never was able to recover one farthing for my services on the estate.

## Stirling Castle, St. Thomas-in-the-Vale.

I was employed on this estate, as overseer, in January 1830. The proprietor, Mr. Kinhead, who some years previously had left the island with a fortune, had been compelled to return a ruined man. His annual crops, under the management of his conscientious attorney, M'Innes and a succession of ruffian tyrants of overseers, had been reduced from 170 hogsheads down to 40! This was clearly caused by the bad system of cultivation, and the murderous severity towards the gang weakening their strength, and diminishing their number. Yet so blinded was Mr. Kinhead, on this matter, and I believe he still remains so, that he was constantly speaking of Sharkey as being the best overseer that ever managed the estate, because Sharkey had made some large crops, yet those very large crops

were actually the ruin of the estate. This is the way in which proprietors delude themselves.

On my return to this estate after a ten years' absence, I found that nearly the whole of those who composed the great gang in 1820, had been flogged into their graves by the year 1830. This wholesale butchery was stopped from the time Mr. Kinkead returned to the country; he was no lover of the whip; but his people were in a wretchedly poor condition owing to the extreme poverty of their master, yet they cheerfully submitted to their privations, as they were much attached to the old gentleman.

I succeeded a person of the name of Twyford, who was a drunken worthless vagabond. Mr. Kinkead told me, "that, on one occasion Twyford laid down a young fellow, named Sammy, and gave him so dreadful a flogging as caused him to commit a nuisance; when the punishment



was over, Twyford had the unparalleled barbarity to force the man to eat some of his own filth." This, by the way, was not at all uncommon with some of the planters in Jamaica.

### Manchester Estate, Trelawney,

After being at Stirling Castle about sixteen months I left it, and went to Trelawney, where I was employed by Mr. Lewis, the attorney of Manchester estate, as book-keeper, with a promise of an overseer's situation in three weeks, at the end of crop. The overseers name was Scanlon. I was so much confined to the still-house, that I had no time to dine at the overseer's table till crop was finished. The first Sunday after crop, several of the neighbouring planters dined with us on the estate. About that time the whole country was getting very much exasperated at the spread of religion amongst

the slaves ; and on this occasion the conversation at table was chiefly on that subject. They related to each other the different sorts of punishment they inflicted on the “ *black rascals*” for their praying, and going to the sectarian chapels on Sundays. Their bitterest curses fell upon the Baptists, and one of the missionaries (Mr. Whitehorn) came in for the largest share of their abuse. Nothing but his destruction would satisfy them, I felt indignant at such language, and my feelings getting the better of my prudence, I ventured to take up the cudgels for Mr. Whitehorn and the other ministers of religion, and declared they were doing a great deal of good in the country, and ought to be encouraged by every one. While I was speaking in this manner I was frequently interrupted by the loud cursing and swearing of those present, and finding I would persevere in my remarks, they one by one rose from the table and went away. The sentiments I had expressed were soon con-

veyed to Mr Lewis, my employer, and had the effect of stopping my promotion. He would not discharge me openly for what I said, but persecuted me, to compel me to discharge myself.

I remained for some time doing the duty of a book-keeper, before I was removed. One day I was superintending about twenty selected people, who were digging trenches. One of them asked me, "if I knew Mr. Wilberforce, Mr. Macaulay, and Buxton, who, they were told, were their friends;" and as they never saw me drinking, with the others, telling lies upon and abusing the negroes, or cursing the parsons, they supposed I must be their friend also. I felt surprised and much pleased at this mark of confidence, and replied, "that if they behaved themselves properly, their friends in England would do good for them." They remarked, "that was just what their minister told them," but added, "Don't you see, Massa, that buckra constant pu-

nish we, only for going to God on Sunday; or saying our prayers in negro-house—and you know that's not right."

### Hopewell Estate, Trelawney.

I was removed from Manchester estate to Hopewell, by order of the attorney, Lewis, in order that I might be more effectually sickened of my quarters. Lewis himself had formerly been one of the most savage despots over the slaves under his charge, when he was overseer of Hopewell; but he was by this time a changed man, advocating lenient measures, in all cases excepting those connected with religion—he would have no mercy on those who attended dissenting chapels, or were guilty of praying. To convey an idea of Mr. Charles Lewis's morality, I need but mention that he carried on an incestuous intercourse with his own daughter, a

girl named Eliza, who was a slave on Hopewell.

A Mr. Kennedy was the overseer, He was an illtempered, malicious and vindictive character; he tyrannised over both white and black. One of the book-keepers, named Grey, after being harassed with incessant labour, fell sick, and was left without the smallest care or attention—he could not even get a drop of cold water to cool his parched tongue. He died, and in his dying moments he laid his death at Kennedy's door.

I was sent to line cane-holes for a gang of jobbers. It was the rainy season—for the space of four days it rained in torrents without ceasing; the jobbers and myself were compelled to continue at work; they were tasked to perform each a certain amount of work, without any deduction for weather; the consequence was that they had to be at it from daylight till dark, with-

out even stopping for meals; they ate as they could, while working; they stripped themselves stark-naked on account of the rain, and in that way worked the whole day. On the fourth day I was seized with a severe attack of fever, from this constant exposure, and in two days was so alarmingly ill, that my medical attendant pronounced me past recovery ; but as I had always led an abstemious life, and had a strong constitution, to the surprise of all I began to recover. After that, I had fever and ague every second day, which tormented me for a considerable time. The first day I was able to leave my room, and appear at dinner, was in the Christmas week ; it was the awful period at which the rebellion (as it was called) broke out. Shortly after sitting down to dinner, we were startled by the sound of a horse galloping into the yard ; the rider instantly entered, calling out, “the negroes are up in rebellion, and are burning all before them in St. James’s and Hanover ; every

man must immediately join his company." This intelligence was like an electric shock on our company; a dead silence followed for several moments; all pale and ghastly; eating our dinner was out of the question, but I could not help laughing at their agitation and cowardice.

At last, all prepared to go down to Falmouth, and the overseer ordered me to join them, although scarcely able to walk from my room. The negroes were very attentive to me, assisted in my preparations, and lifted me on my horse; when I rode away, they took charge of my clothes, &c. during my absence. Change of air and good nourishment very rapidly restored me to health.

### Martial Law, 1832.

I shall not pretend to enter into a minute account of the rise and progress of the fatal in-

surrection amongst the slaves at this period, but will briefly mention some of the principal incidents which occurred under my observation, and some which came to my knowledge from the most authentic sources.

On Friday, the 30th of December, three companies of the Trelawney regiment, to which I was attached, were ordered up to Good Hope Estate, about eight miles from Falmouth; here they mounted guard. On the very first night I had an opportunity of witnessing the courage of the valiant heroes of the militia, who were as bold as lions when torturing the poor slaves with the whip. I was a sentry on guard, and about ten o'clock at night a crash was heard near the guard-house: the instant it took place the officers, who were standing outside near me, rushed into the guard-room, terribly alarmed, and bolted themselves in, leaving me alone outside! After this there was a profound silence



for nearly fifteen minutes. I went to the place whence the noise proceeded, and I found it was caused by a drunken comrade, who had tumbled against a rotten paling, which had given way under the weight of his body! Such is the courage of tyrants, when apprehending the revenge of their persecuted victims!

On *Sunday*, New-year's day, martial law was proclaimed, and we were ordered up to Golden Grove Estate that same night. In endeavouring to go there by a short cut, the night being exceedingly dark, we lost our way; and after stumbling over one another for some hours, we were obliged to return, and take the main road. It was a providential circumstance that this detention occurred, because it was settled that we were to have surrounded the negro houses, and in that case the slaughter of the innocent and defenceless people would have been tremendous. As it was, we did not reach the estate till day-

light. As we approached, I observed them running out of their houses in great confusion ; the militia then rushed forward, and commenced firing in every direction on the unarmed and unresisting negroes, men and women, old and young, indiscriminately. The ground was fortunately exceedingly uneven, which favoured the escape of the people. One of the head drivers, who had been protecting his master's property all night, was shot through both thighs ; another man, who was going to his work with a hoe on his shoulder, was shot through the head, and fell dead on the spot. Two or three others were reported to have been shot, but I saw none but these two. So wild and ungovernable was the fury of the militia-men in seeking to destroy the poor negroes, that, in their haste and confusion in running about the negro houses, firing in all directions, it was a miracle they did not kill one another. Some of the poor people rushed down to the overseer's house, and claim-

ed his protection. He behaved very properly, remonstrated with the cowardly ruffians, and succeeded in stopping the carnage. It must be remarked, that the negroes on Golden Grove had committed no offence, they had taken no part in the insurrection, but had been quietly pursuing their labours; but they were suspected of some intention that way, on a mere idle rumour of the evening before. By this outrageous act they were driven into the woods. After this exhibition of folly and wickedness, we returned to Good Hope. That night Captain Brown, our commanding officer, in a drunken fit visited the guard-room, and put us through our manœuvres in a place scarcely large enough to hold us. He addressed us as follows—"Men! we have got a challenge from the rebels. Men! won't you follow me? Men! won't you die with your captain? Your captain will die with you! Now, prime and load—make ready—present—fire! Now, port arms—charge bayonets!"

On this the men rushed with their bayonets to the opposite side of the room, and ran their bayonets through the window, and smashed the panes of glass. These drunken freaks were common throughout the disturbed district, and at these times a score of resolute men would have been able to destroy a hundred of these braggart militia-men. The next morning we were marched to Bunker's-Hill, and surrounded the houses at day-break. There was only one man in the negro village, and as he came out the whole company fired at him, and killed him on the spot. An old woman scarcely able to crawl was found, and dragged before the captain, who demanded where the negroes had gone, &c. She declared her ignorance, on which this Captain Brown took his sword, and laid on the poor old woman with all his strength, using the flat side of his sword. After this we passed through several estates, which we found deserted, and we came to Dromily Estate, where the alarm

was given that there were rebels in the Cane-piece. The militia was formed into line, and a rustling being at the moment observed in the canes, a volley was fired, by which several cattle, which were the cause of the alarm, were shot. We were then ordered to search the Cane-piece: while I was engaged in this duty, I found a stout able negro, with a cutlass in his hand, crouching down among the canes. No one being near, I said to him in a low tone, "lie down where you are, and do not move, I won't touch you, but if you attempt to come near me with your cutlass, I'll shoot you." The poor man expressed his gratitude in dumb show with his hands; immediately afterwards several others of the militia passed close to where the man lay, but did not see him. I pretended that I heard a noise in another direction, so as to draw them off, and thus the poor fellow escaped. After this fruitless search, the head ranger of the estate was called, and asked where the people

were concealed. He pointed out a place where he supposed they might be; we marched to the spot, but found no one; it was not to be expected that the people would remain to be butchered in cold blood. The valiant militia then fell upon the poor ranger; the officers beat him with their swords, and several of the men in the most brutal manner struck the man with the butt end of their muskets, and smashed his head and face, the poor fellow calling out, "O Lord! I beg you will shoot me one time!" He was not, however, quite killed then, but was afterwards taken to the bay, and hanged.

After this we again returned to Good Hope. Every day afterwards we were sent on short excursions amongst the neighbouring estates, to find out any of the poor blacks to put to death, but without effect; they knew that no mercy would be shown, and therefore kept out of sight.

Some days afterwards we were ordered to march to St. James's. We came to Barrett-Hall estate, the property of Mr. Speaker Barrett. In approaching the estate we met a man on the road, who became terrified at our appearance, and jumped over a wall to escape; the whole company immediately fired upon him; he was struck but rose again, and ran, bleeding; again he fell, rose up again, and several times fell and rose, running a few paces each time—the militia still firing on him. At length, one of the troopers sprang over the wall, went up to the poor creature, and began to hack and chop him with his sword, but without killing him; when finally, one of the others finished the brutal tragedy, by shooting him through the head.

None of the people on Barrett-Hall had left the estate. They were all called out, and ranged in a row, the men separate from the women. The major (Dr. Neilson) demanded of the head-

driver, who it was that pulled down the proclamation that had been posted on the door of the works. He denied any knowledge about it. Major Neilson then ordered the company to direct their pieces at the driver, and if he offered to move, to blow his brains out. Neilson then addressed the gang, and said, "if they did not point out the man who had done it, he would shoot them from right to left;" and turning to the driver once more, he demanded "who it was:" the driver immediately pointed out a fine handsome young fellow as the delinquent. In an instant Neilson gave the fearful order—"take that fellow to the rear, and shoot him." He was seized, and had just time to call out, "O, Lord, massa, don't kill me," when just as he passed the rear rank, a blood-thirsty wretch, named Watson, anxious to be foremost in the work of death, levelled his gun close to my breast, the muzzle within six inches of the poor man, and fired; the



ball passed through his wrist, then into the mouth and through the back part of his head, and he fell dead without a groan! The scene that followed beggars description. The poor slaves were overwhelmed with terror; some threw themselves on their knees, and raised their hands to heaven, under the impression that the slaughter of the whole was intended; the women and children screamed fearfully, and the whole of them in the most piteous manner begged that their lives might be spared. After some fierce threats of vengeance in case of any thing going wrong, we were drawn off, and returned to Bounty-Hall. On the way we were divided into small parties hunting for negroes—it reminded me of a pack of harriers on the scent after hares. We met with no one on whom to gratify the planter's thirst for blood.

The next place we visited was Leyden Estate, where we slept for one night. Next morning,

when preparing to march, one of the privates, named Donald M'Donald, was missing—he had gone to the negro-houses for the purpose of plunder, &c. While there, he met with a woman, whom he deliberately shot through both legs, at her own door—he then robbed her of various articles, such as gold rings, &c. This infamous outrage was committed with perfect impunity. M'Donald is now head-constable at Falmouth, at a salary of £300. a year. These robberies upon the poor negroes were common throughout martial law. On one occasion our company visited Georgia Estate, which was quite peaceable, the rebellion never having spread thus far. The militia called there to see if the people were at work, and found them all right. Notwithstanding this, they deliberately killed one of the men, and destroyed all the pigs, poultry, &c. that they could find, in the most wanton manner; they then commenced ransacking the negro-houses, and robbed the people of

their clothes, and every valuable thing they could carry away. One of the privates found in the house of one of the tradesmen eight doubloons (£42.) in gold, and took possession of it. Lieutenant Neilson (who was afterwards my overseer) heard of it, and had it taken from the private: what Neilson did with it I know not, but it was never restored to the poor slave.

From this time to the end of martial law, the incidents which occurred were not such as require minute description. We were sent out every day in small parties to look for negroes, but they had retreated to the woods, and kept out of our way. One day a man was observed concealed in a high tree; he was killed by a shot, without a word being spoken to him. On the following day, in our march we fell in with five men, who ran off the moment they perceived us: the whole company fired on the fugitives, and destroyed two of them. Three days before

the termination of martial law, I got leave of absence to return home, as the overseer Kennedy had died of fever since I left the estate.

I will now mention a few facts which, although I did not witness them, were related to me on the most unquestionable authority.

At the commencement of the insurrection, when all the white people left the estates, a person named Jones, an engineer tradesman on Chester Castle, who was sadly addicted to liquor, was left drunk in his room. The rebels came to the estate, surrounded the buildings, and set fire to them. While they were burning, Jones was discovered, and was dragged out unhurt ; some of the people called out, " don't hurt him, he never trouble poor nega !" They got him his hat, his arms, ammunition and accoutrements, and delivered them up to him, without abstracting a single cartridge. He could scarcely

walk, he was so drunk; but they led him to the gate, and pushed him outside, and told him to go and join the other white people, for if he stopped with them, it might cause him to be suspected. When he reached the militia station, his comrades were speculating on his probable fate, predicting that the negroes would to a certainty destroy him, perhaps with cruel torture!

On another occasion a white carpenter was in the interior, and had no means of joining his company without coming in contact with the rebels, and therefore dare not make the attempt; in this state he was met with by Dehaney, the captain of the rebels, who was acquainted with him. Dehaney not only protected him from injury, but escorted him through bye paths, and delivered him safely to his company, afterwards returning to his own party to carry on the warfare. Yet this poor man after being taken, tried by a court-martial, and condemned to death

(execution following sentence within a few minutes), when he requested to be allowed to appease the gnawings of hunger before going to the scaffold, and while eating a piece of bread in perfect calmness, the executioner was ordered, by some of the officers, to drag him away before he had finished the morsel. The man went up to Dehaney with the rope, on which was a running noose, and throwing it over his head as if he had been a horse, pulled it with a violent jerk, saying, "Come away with you!" and thus dragged him out of the court-house, to the scaffold in front of the building. This piece of heartless brutality created a loud laugh amongst the *gentlemen* assembled.

I will close this account by relating a scene which occurred on the last day of martial law. The company to which I had been attached was returning home—I had already left them. They stopped on Flamstead estate for the night, and

divided themselves into parties among the cane-pieces, stopping in the few huts that remained unburnt. One party, in approaching a hut, met with five negroes coming out of it; two of them were shot dead, the others escaped. Another party fell in with a fine young man, about twenty years of age; they took him prisoner, and told him at the peril of his life to tell where the rest of the people were: he said they were scattered up and down every where, looking for officers to give them protection. They took him with them to the hut they were going to occupy, and made him get up the fire and cook for them; after which they made him sleep in the hut along with themselves, sentries keeping guard, and patrolling through the cane piece at night. Next morning at day-break, the poor fellow was called out of the hut by a private named *Wilkinson*, who immediately made a deadly plunge at him with his fixed bayonet, with the intention of running him through the body.

The young man sprang aside, and laid hold of the gun by the muzzle. The instant he did so, Wilkinson fired; the ball entered his hand obliquely, and passed upwards, tearing up the arm as far as the shoulder, where it passed out. The poor fellow thus wounded, still clung to the gun with a death grasp, calling out, "Massa don't, don't kill me—don't kill me—this death too hot." As Wilkinson could not extricate his gun, he called out to Lieut. Dalrymple, who was coolly looking on without interfering, to lend him a pistol, to shoot the man; Dalrymple refused to do this, but he lent him his sword, with which Wilkinson commenced cutting and slashing with one hand while holding the gun with the other—still the man did not fall; at last another private named Coultard came up and ran his bayonet through the man's heart! immediately after this, this same Coultard, in going through another part of the cane piece, met one of the serjeants with a prisoner under his charge with-



out saying one word, Coultard lowered his musket, rushed upon the man, and drove his bayonet through his body.

The scenes here depicted will convey to the reader a faint idea of the horrid butchery that prevailed for several weeks, in all parts of the parishes of St. James's and Trelawney.

I may here just observe, that from all I could gather from the negroes themselves, as well as others, the overt acts of rebellion, such as firing the estates, &c., were almost exclusively confined to a few runaways, who had for years been living in fastnesses in the interior, where they had been driven by murderous persecution, and that the great mass of the slaves on the estates, who were denounced and treated as rebels, had merely left the estates to avoid being murdered by the savage and reckless militiamen. All that was designed, by the people on

the estates, was to lay down their hoes and strike work.

It is a great consolation to me to reflect, that, throughout the rebellion, although I was in the midst of such scenes of carnage, I never once pointed a gun at a negro, nor ever hurt a hair of one of their heads. All my inclinations, in fact, were to have joined with the unfortunate people, had I seen the smallest chance of success.

I returned to Hopewell estate, and lived under George Neilson, who obtained the appointment of overseer after the death of Kennedy. Neilson was a drunkard, and the most deceitful and treacherous man I ever met with. He was exceedingly cruel to the slaves, when sober; but when drunk, was disgustingly familiar. His whole system of management was one of intrigue and espionage—he could do nothing straightforward—all was done by craft and low

cunning ; but I shall only need to mention the termination of his career, to shew his true character. He was discharged from Hopewell, shortly after which he was apprehended for *robbing the mail*, was brought to trial, and found guilty, but recommended to mercy by a jury of planters. He was sentenced to transportation. On his arrival in England, Mr. William Miller interceded for him with government, and obtained his pardon ! Had it been a black or a brown man who had done the same deed, torturing to death by slow fire would not have been too bad for him.

After martial law, the planters observed no limits in their barbarity to the slaves. Their labours were increased, and the most fearful punishments followed the most trivial offences, often no offence at all. The condition of the people was infinitely worse than before ; and had not the British public stepped forward to

put an end to the system, I am certain the slaves would have been driven to repeat the attempt to break their yoke, and perhaps with far more disastrous consequences.

I discharged myself from Hopewell, and became so disgusted with the planting line, that I made up my mind to leave it altogether. I commenced a little business on my own account, near Stewart's Town; but, as I had only a small capital, it was soon sunk in speculations, and as the planters in the neighbourhood were entirely against me, I was unable to succeed. I pass over the succeeding years up to the middle of 1836, during which space I was in various capacities, struggling to obtain a livelihood.

### Peru Estate.

In May, 1836, I was employed by Mr. R. Z. Hemming, on Peru Estate, as overseer. The

apprenticeship system, was, of course, at this time, in operation. The estate had been very much neglected, and the people were in a sad state of poverty and destitution, as regards provisions. Yet notwithstanding this, Mr. Hemming directed me to turn the cattle into the negro grounds, under the pretence that they were trenching on the cane-pieces. This excuse for his unfeeling conduct was without foundation, as only in one or two points there was a trespass of a few feet, and for this the whole of the grounds were to be destroyed. I delayed doing as I was told, for two months, and was then compelled to comply with the order. The consequence was, that one of my horses and a cow were destroyed immediately afterwards in the pasture, under the idea that the destruction of their grounds was my wilful act, although I had explained to them that it was the positive order of Hemming, whom they supposed incapable of an act of such meanness and cruelty.

This very matter was actually the origin of Mr. R. Z. Hemming's discharging me from the situation; for although he gave me the order in the most peremptory manner, and repeated it several times, yet he wished me to take the responsibility on my own shoulders, so as to save him from disgrace at the government-house, the estate being in chancery.

As a specimen of Mr. R. Z. Hemming's honesty, I will lay before the reader the following facts. A book-keeper, named Hughes, was leaving the estate, a balance of salary being due to him of £7. As Mr. Hemming lived at a considerable distance from Peru, in order to save poor Hughes so long a journey, I paid him the amount, and took his receipt, on the part of the property,—in fact in Mr. Hemming's name, as if he had paid it. This receipted account I put into the hands of a merchant (Mr. Lyon), of Falmouth, to receive the amount from Hemming; enclosed

the receipt to Mr. H., and requested payment, but Mr. R. Z. Hemming *kept the receipt*, and refused to pay one farthing of the £7. The next case is even worse than this. A carpenter belonging to the estate named Reeder, had been employed, in his own time, to repair the roof of the hospital. I attested the account, and receipted it for the man, and then enclosed it in a letter to Mr. Hemming, requesting him to transmit the amount to the apprentice. Mr. Hemming *kept the receipt*, but never sent the money; and twelve months afterwards I learned that he had never paid the amount to the poor apprentice. When applied to by my successor, he replied, "*I have paid the money, because I find I have the receipt for it !*"

The whole gang had been employed, in their own time, during crop, to work for wages,—and after crop Hemming sent his clerk, under the pretence of settling the estate's accounts,

Instead of paying the people in money, he gave them slips of paper, a sort of I O U's, although I had previously warned the people not to take them. *They were never paid.* On Mr. Hemming's next visit to the estate, I drew his attention to the fact, and the people applied to him for payment; he replied, he had nothing to do with it, said he had given the clerk the money, and therefore he supposed the clerk's arrangements were satisfactory. Thus were the poor negroes robbed of the fruits of their industry, and Mr. Hemming had not sufficient regard for appearances to discharge the clerk; he retained him in his employ, perhaps to do the same elsewhere!

I had a parcel of carpenter's tools, remaining out of my stock in trade. The estate was very much in want of tools, and I sold them to it, to the amount of about £20. currency. On leaving I sent to Hemming an order for the payment,—



he refused to pay, *and refused to let me take the tools back!*

### York Estate, Trelawney.

I was employed as head book-keeper here for ten or eleven months, during which time nothing occurred that requires particular notice. The apprenticeship was easier in this quarter than in almost any other, owing, I believe, to the planter's dread of the Rev. Mr. Knibb, who never failed to expose their evil deeds.

York estate has been ruined by large crops, and excessively bad management; the labourers have been worn down by hard labour and the most outrageous persecution. On this head I could say much, but it would occupy too much space and time. I was discharged from York

without any reason being assigned; and when I applied to Mr. Bridges, the attorney, for the reason, he refused it, saying, "You may blame yourself; ask your own conscience." I was unconscious of having done any thing at all improper, but I afterwards learned that the real cause of my dismissal was this:—I had been speaking my opinions very freely to one of the head apprentices on the estate, against the planters in general, and in favour of the Baptist ministers, as also of my intention to come home to expose matters. Some time after this I had a dispute with this man, when he, under the influence of passion, went to the overseer, told him I had been speaking against him and the attorney, as to their management of the estate, as also the overseer's mistress and others. This was enough, and I was discharged a day or two after. This sort of treachery I have occasionally met with amongst the negroes, but I look

on it as the mere effect of slavery. I afterwards found that the man was not esteemed by his fellow-apprentices ; he was considered generally deceitful.

### Latium Estate, St James's.

I was engaged here as book-keeper, under one William Tinling, Mr. Henry Hunter being the attorney. The apprentices were very much oppressed, both by the overseer and the special magistrate. Although task work was forbidden by law, except with consent of the labourers, it was imposed on the gangs at Latium, and strictly enforced by the magistrate. The task put on the people was sometimes heavier than ever the people had been compelled to do in slavery. On one occasion I was ordered to line cane-pieces for the second gang, at the rate of ten labourers to the acre ; that is, giving to each

300 cane roots, at four feet square, to clean and trash per day. This would have been considered a very full day's work in slavery, when they were kept at it twelve or thirteen hours per day, and when the fields were only moderately foul; but in this instance, not only was the cane-piece full of high grass, which increased the amount of heavy toil, but, in consequence of my being compelled to measure their work by the *acre*, I was under the necessity of exacting 400 instead of 300 cane holes per day. The consequence was, that the poor people could not perform the task set them, although they kept at work, with scarcely a moment's cessation, from day-light till dark. I was much hurt at hearing them, all through the day, abusing and muttering their complaints against me, on the ground that I was *cheating* them, which was very true, but I could not help it, as I was bound to obey orders. I therefore spoke to the driver, and told him that it was

altogether against my wish to put such a task upon the people, but that if I did not do it, I should be discharged, and whoever succeeded me would be obliged to do the same thing, consequently they would be no better off, and I should be thrown out of employment. The driver mentioned this to the people, and from that time they ceased to complain against me. When Mr. Carnaby next visited the estate, they made a formal complaint, that they were tasked beyond their strength, and requested him to have justice done to them. Mr. Carnaby refused to entertain their complaint, and insisted on their performing the full amount of labour required. He did this, no doubt, to save himself the trouble of investigating the matter, and to avoid any collision with the overseer or attorney; for Mr. Carnaby, like many others, cared little for the rights or interests of the poor negroes, if he could only keep on good terms with the planters.

It was really shameful to see how the people were imposed upon. Even the third gang, consisting of young children from nine to twelve years of age, were tasked to do an amount of work which kept them from dawn of day till dark at night, without giving them time to eat a single meal; and this they were obliged to do in all weathers. It has often made my heart ache to see the little creatures, after working all day in the heavy rain, returning at night, shivering with cold and hunger. It is not to be supposed that the negroes who have been treated in this manner could ever settle down quietly under such managers, when free to choose their own masters. It was the duty of the magistrates to prevent this sort of oppression, but that was a duty which very few of the magistrates had the honesty or courage to perform.

Mr. Carnaby is an improper person to hold

the situation of special magistrate. I was once present when he was holding his court on Latium estate, when a young woman in the last stage of pregnancy was brought before him, for refusing to continue at work. He threatened to send her to the house of correction; on which she alluded to the state she was in, and openly reminded him that *he was the father of the child!*

But the following story, which was related to me on very good authority, is much worse. Mr. Carnaby one evening went to Williamsfield estate, with the overseer of which (a Mr. Brown) he was on intimate terms, and remained there for the night. When retiring to bed, a young woman, one of the domestics in the house, was ordered to light him to his room. The overseer accompanied him to the door, and, before the girl had time to get out of the room, he locked the door outside, leaving the girl exposed to the

brutal lust of the magistrate! There can be no reasonable doubt but that it was a preconcerted plan between the two *friends*, as such was a common practice in slavery. How far Mr. Carnaby was criminal, as regards actual force, I cannot say; but the girl's clothes were torn from her back, and the following morning the mother of the girl made so serious a disturbance about the matter, that Mr. Carnaby deemed it prudent to give her a sum of money, amounting, I was told, to £30., to prevent exposure at the Government House.

The overseer of Latium estate, Tinling, was a notorious gambler, and such was his passion for it, that, when he had no better company, he used to send at night to *invite* (which was tantamount to *ordering*) the book-keepers to come in, and play at cards with him. He was up to all the petty tricks and frauds of the game, and of course, always won. One of my brother



book-keepers lost at different times to the amount of £11.; and I, in the same way, was let in for upwards of £5, three pounds of which remained unpaid. I was disgusted with these proceedings, and refused to go on any longer; and shortly afterwards, having a dispute with my brother book-keeper, on account of his attempting to throw the blame of his carelessness on my shoulders, I discharged myself from the situation. On presenting my account to Mr. Hunter, the attorney, he mentioned that he had been requested by Mr. Tinling to stop £3. out of my salary, which he said I owed to him. I asked Mr. Hunter if he was aware of the nature of the debt, that it was a gambling transaction. He said he knew it, but that made no difference, he should hold back the amount: to this I objected, and insisted on being paid the full amount of my salary, and expressed my determination to bring the matter into court. Mr. Hunter, however, persisted in refusing to

pay me, unless I submitted to the deduction. I therefore applied to the Clerk of the Peace, and instructed him to institute the necessary proceedings; which had the desired effect. Mr. Hunter was afraid of such a disgraceful affair being brought before open court, and therefore sent me the full amount of my account; and as to Mr. Tinling's pretended claim, I never paid it, and never intend to do so, as he gave orders to the attorney for the stoppage of £5, the amount of his gambling debt, out of my salary, and without my knowledge, which I looked upon as a base fraud.

### Flower Hill Estate, St. James.

This was the last estate with which I had any connection. I was employed here by the attorney, Mr. Walcott, in January last (1838), and remained until the end of April. A Mr.

Faucus was the overseer. I have little or nothing particular to report respecting the treatment of the people, as I was so much involved in trouble myself, that I had no leisure for general observation. I had here to witness a disgraceful specimen of the wanton destruction of the property of absentee proprietors, which has been but too common at all periods amongst agents and overseers.

When first I went to Flower Hill, there was a young man, named Charles Moulton, who was book-keeper in the still-house. The overseer and he quarrelled, which led to his discharge, and I was appointed to succeed him in the still-house. After a little time, Faucus, suspecting that I continued on friendly terms with Moulton, and being of a most implacable and vindictive temper, did all in his power to annoy and injure me. The reputation of a book-keeper in the still-house depends on his making a fair

proportion of rum to the sugar crop; if he make less than the proportion, he is considered unfit for promotion, and yet his means of accomplishing it are left entirely to the caprice of the overseer, who may throw a thousand obstacles in the way of justice being done. In this way many a young man, who has come under the displeasure of his overseer, has been entirely ruined. In this instance, Faucus commenced by ordering me to set the liquor according to his instructions, and not by my own plans. To this I assented, on the understanding that he would bear me harmless should any deficiency arise, which he readily promised in presence of the distillers. He then directed me to mix the molasses with water, at the rate of fifty per cent. and sometimes more, to which I was to add a little dunder. He allowed very little of the skimmings of the coppers, as the principal part was given to the mules and hogs. By this process one might have supposed he intended to

make nothing but vinegar. I was confident that it was not done through ignorance, but from a settled design to destroy the rum crop, in order to ruin the book-keeper. I waited patiently to see the result of his folly ; and out of upwards of thirteen puncheons of molasses, we only procured three hundred gallons of rum instead of one thousand gallons, causing a loss to the proprietor of no less than seven hundred gallons, in about three weeks. Immediately after this, a young man was sent to succeed me in the still-house ; but, after only three days' trial, he threw up the situation in disgust, and I was again put back into the same occupation, but with the determination to be no longer instrumental in destroying the produce of a property where I was obtaining my bread. I therefore made every effort to preserve the sweets from destruction. The races at Montego Bay engaged the overseer's attention, which enabled me to carry on my own plans. During

his absence I set up liquor in a proper manner, and from eight thousand gallons of wash I obtained eight puncheons of rum, by which means the crop was in some measure redeemed, though still considerably below the mark. My representations to Mr. Walcott, the attorney, produced no amendment. This is only one, out of the many hundred cases that occur in Jamaica every year, where the absentee proprietor sustains serious loss, through the caprice or villany of his agent or overseer.

I was now determined to put into execution the plan which I had for several years back resolved upon, of coming to England, to lay before the public, and particularly absentee proprietors, what I knew of the proceedings of the Jamaica planters; and for this purpose I sold all I possessed to enable me to pay my passage, &c. At the time of my leaving, I had

no idea of the apprenticeship being put an end to so early ; but, as that has happily been effected, I have considered it unnecessary to occupy much of the reader's time with the details of that system, but will just say, that, although, in many respects, the apprenticeship was far less atrocious than slavery, yet, in many other respects, the generality of the negroes were in a more destitute and miserable condition than formerly. The magistrates very seldom gave them any protection, and the overseers, as they could not flog and tear the flesh of their victims, constantly vented their spite in the most dreadfully abusive and obscene language, which always hurts the feelings of the negroes even more than corporal punishment. The bad feeling which existed during slavery between the labourers and managers, has in most instances been increased instead of diminished under the apprenticeship ; and I am

confident that there will be neither peace nor prosperity in the country, while the present race of overseers continue to reside there.

I now think it proper to make a few general remarks on the character and conduct of resident proprietors, estates, attorneys, overseers, and book-keepers, illustrating the same with a few anecdotes respecting various well-known persons. This will enable parties at home to judge how far such men ought to be entrusted with the charge of properties, now that so much depends on a good understanding between the land-owners and the labourers.





**RESIDENT PROPRIETORS.**



## RESIDENT PROPRIETORS.

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The resident proprietors in Jamaica, were very few in number ; but their conduct in general was far from being unexceptionable. Take the following as a sample of the cases, which, but for my limited space, I might have adduced.

Mr. Coots, Montego Bay.

The above gentleman was a married man, and

had property at Montego Bay, on which he kept an overseer; but although married, every female upon his property was compelled to yield to his bestial and lustful desires. Such young females, as from fear of their mistress, or deficiency of age, resisted his approaches, were, at his direction, placed in the stocks by the overseers, and the key of the hospital was then sent to him. In this place of concealment, he visited the objects of his passion, and accomplished his diabolical purpose upon these defenceless females, whilst their feet were loaded with shackles of iron. There was an example for his children growing up to maturity!

**Mr. Richard P. Martin, St. Thomas-in-the-Vale.**

**Mr. Richard Palmer Martin, proprietor of Mount Sion plantation, as also of other pro-**

perties, was for many years a magistrate in the island of Jamaica. He too was a married man ; but at one time he purchased his own daughter, a mulatto, from the Water Valley estate, in the parish of St. Mary's, and brought her to Mount Sion, where he resided with his wife and family. As this young female grew up, she was compelled to yield to her unnatural father's incestuous desires, and had several children by him. But the evil did not rest here ; for, as afterwards appeared, he had other children by his quadroon daughters : thus leaving, at the time of his death, mustees ; all of whom were grand-children, or the great grand-children of a black woman, and he himself the father. So wicked and barbarous was this monster in human shape, that, for the most trifling offence, he would cause pitch caps to be placed upon the heads of his people, and afterwards direct them to be dragged off by force ; thus leaving the bleeding victims in the most excruciating

agonies. In travelling, he always boasted of carrying pistols by his side; and even in his hours of retirement he was never unarmed. As his life was that of an outcast from society, so his death was a matter of public rejoicing to all in his neighbourhood.

**Messrs. Manderson, Spence and Co.  
Montego Bay.**

The above firm, who were residing for many years in the parish of St. James's, at Montego Bay, and who were trading as merchants between the islands of Jamaica and Cuba, had a sloop in their possession which was nicknamed "Blackbird," on account of its being employed to convey slaves, which had been kidnapped in Jamaica, to the island of Cuba for sale. For the promotion of their abominable traffic, they employed a negro, called "Ned," belonging to

Mr. Davis, of that town, to whom they gave certain sums of money for each slave he could induce to go on board. His plan was, when they were once on board, to give them plenty to eat and drink ; after which they fell asleep, and in all probability did not awake till the following morning ; at which time, to their great surprise, "Ned" was gone, and they themselves were far out at sea. Such persons were never taken on board until the evening of the day on which the vessel was cleared out from the custom-house, and consequently they set sail the same night for Cuba. This traffic continued for several years, and slaves in every quarter of the district were missing, the owners of whom supposed them to have fled to the woods as run-aways. At length, however, Ned succeeded in inducing the servant, or butler, of Mr. Perry, the custos of the parish, to go and sup with him on board the "Blackbird," for whom he had reserved the same fate as the rest. This young



man, by his activity and pleasing manners, soon rose in the esteem of his new Spanish masters, and as a natural result was allowed much more liberty than that which was granted to his fellow-slaves. Of this liberty he availed himself; and, though at imminent risk, seized upon a canoe, and, taking a few bottles of water with him, set out one night for Jamaica. He was taken up at sea, and conveyed in safety to his former master, to whom he explained the nature of his capture; and at the same time informed him that he had seen many others upon the island, who were supposed to be run-aways, but who had been captured in a similar manner. A slave court was ordered, and the evidence being of the most convincing nature, poor "Ned" was found guilty, and sentenced to be hung before the Messrs. Manderson and Co.'s door, whilst the promoters of this odious traffic escaped on the ground of the inadmissibility of slave evidence against the whites. Many of the poor

people, who were thus robbed of their slaves, were compelled to sell their little properties, and run into debt; whilst some of them, to the no small mortification of their feelings, had to return to a state of dependence upon their slave relations. Such was the robbery committed upon the poor by men of affluence and of supposed respectability; but by men upon whose heads the blighting curse of the defenceless and the orphan will continue to rest.

### Estate Attorneys

Absentee proprietors consign the management of their estates to agents, who are here called attorneys. Some of these persons represent the interests of twenty or thirty estates, and consequently have great influence in the island. Some years ago, it was the practice of young attorneys to endeavour to rival each other in

the production of large sugar crops ; by which some of them subsequently distinguished themselves as planters of the first class. For the immediate promotion of that object, these attorneys employed overseers, remarkable for their blood-thirsty cruelty. Such overseers, though divested of the feelings of humanity, were denominated able planters. Their plan was this :— an arrangement was entered into between the overseer and the attorney, as to the number of hogsheads of sugar which would be required ; a good salary with every thing necessary to aid in the prosecution of his object, was promised : the overseer, therefore, regardless of every obstacle, determines to allow nothing to interfere with his interests. His failure to produce the requisite supply, after such an arrangement with the attorney, would end, not only in his being discharged, but in his being reported throughout the island as unfit to command.— With such motives operating upon the mind of

a man, by no means alive to the tender sensibilities of our common nature, it is easy to perceive, that, where his interests were immediately concerned, neither treachery, bribery, nor any species of villany, would be left unemployed. From his book-keepers, his head labourers, and his domestics, he would at all times hear such stories, whether true or false, as would furnish him with a pretext, either to discharge or to torture, as the case may be, such persons as were under his command. The consequence was, that one book-keeper was watching another; the head people and domestics were viewing each other with an eye of jealousy; and all, by the meanest and most despicable stratagems, were endeavouring to ingratiate themselves in the esteem of the overseer. No one was secure from misrepresentation. From the highest to the lowest every one was equally exposed. During the time of making these forced crops, the labourers were driven with the cart-whip from

morning till night ; cartmen, mulemen, and watchmen were employed with the least possible intervals for rest ; and even grass-cutters, from seventy years old and upwards, were exposed to the same barbarous atrocities. This may be taken as a true picture of every estate on the island, where a forced crop was attempted.

I should here remark, that, for the most part, the estates upon which forced crops were attempted, were such as have been previously greatly neglected, or such as embrace a large quantity of virgin land, which at all times is exceedingly productive. Such estates, under an effective gang of labourers, will continue to yield these crops for eight or ten successive years ; after which period they begin to show symptoms of complete exhaustion. The proprietor, perhaps, has at this time some heavy engagement to meet with his banker, or others ; and calculating, upon his returns of sugar being

equal to those of the preceding years, his arrangements for meeting these demands are made accordingly. He writes to his attorney, stating the pressing nature of his engagements, and hoping that, by a favourable season and a good crop, he shall be able to meet them. More cane land is now planted than the labourers are able to manage; the most horrid cruelties are resorted to by the overseers, under the sanction of the attorneys; and, from the destruction of stock consequent upon this system of forcing, the property becomes ultimately involved.

But let me here descend a little more to particulars. On every estate in the island of Jamaica, where large crops are an object, all other improvements are entirely neglected. No attention is paid to fences, to the clearing of pasture lands, or to the repairs of the buildings. Large cane fields are planted without manure; weeds are seen luxuriating in the midst of the canes,

as they grow up, and all classes, old and young, are out at work, under the scourge of the lash, from four in the morning until dark at night. The overseer, perhaps, expecting about this time a visit from the attorney, rides round the estate, and observing the dirty state of the <sup>cane-pieces</sup> ~~crops~~, takes summary vengeance upon the labourers. To complain under such circumstances would only be to ensure an increase of punishment. They therefore tamely submit never daring so much as to offer a single remonstrance.

But this is not all; the disastrous effects of this system of management present themselves to the eye in whatever direction it is turned. For, in the first place, under this system of management, the whole of the buildings in the space of eight or ten years, either require general repair, or what is more frequently the case, to be entirely rebuilt. Secondly, the cane

land in every direction is completely worn out. Thirdly, the trace of a fence is not to be seen on the estate. And fourthly, the roads are impassable; the pasture lands covered with underwood; the cattle pens inadequately supplied with fodder; and the labourers' grounds almost entirely neglected, from their being unable, after the toil and barbarity to which they have been subjected by their task-masters for six days out of the seven, to cultivate them. The absentee by this time begins to discover, from the decrease of crops, and from the death of labourers and of stock, that his property is fast hastening to ruin. The attorney is then discharged, and his successor in all probability at once discharges the overseer. An accurate account of the condition of every thing belonging to the estate is then taken; and the proprietor discovers, when it is too late, that his property, which ten years ago would have



parish at the time ; and have frequently heard, both from the black and white people under his control, that merely a word from his lips would strike terror into their very hearts. By an unsparing use of the lash, he succeeded in making forced crops ; and as a reward for his merit, he was appointed to the attorneyship of Arcadia estate, on which he lived. At this time he purchased a gang of negroes for himself, among whom was a violent and ferocious Ebo, whom he afterwards converted into his driver. This monster in human shape never carried a whip, but a bludgeon ; and with this, when aroused by a deficiency of work, or even by a slighter cause, he would not hesitate to spatter the brains of the wretched victims, on the ground. Two or three cases of this kind, perhaps, would occur in the course of the year, without the slightest legal enquiry as to the cause of these poor people's death. All this, it must be understood, was done under the sanction

of Mr. Miller, who on one occasion, as is said, put a negro man into a puncheon with old nails, and then gave orders to have him rolled down a steep hill into a sink-hole at the bottom, which was the common receptacle for the bodies of all, such as were murdered upon that estate.

In spite of these atrocious barbarities, or rather as the result of them, Mr. Miller afterwards became the most extensive attorney on the island. His recommendation would place any man in any capacity he might wish; whilst on the other hand, his wrath would entail destruction upon any one who should happen to be the unfortunate victim of it. On all properties that were under his control, he exercised his ferocious barbarity, by forcing large crops, which reduced the estate's capital by the death of negroes and stock:—consequently the estates fell into the grasp of a mortgagee. When the merchant who supplied the estate was the prin-

principal creditor of the absent proprietor, and who hoped shortly to come into possession of the estate, either by transfer or purchase, therefore the cultivation of cane on all such estates was entirely neglected, until they fell into the possession of the merchant; after which period the faithful agent would double his crops. By this, and similar plans, the interest of the absent proprietor was invariably sacrificed to the merchant's interest, as the agency of the estates was generally obtained through merchants.—While thus preparing an estate for the hammer, both the attorney and overseer seldom fail in making a fortune. Mr. Miller's favourite overseers made large fortunes:—he himself amassed a princely one before he left for England, in 1833.

William Miller, jun., the natural son of the above Mr. Miller, is now an attorney in Jamaica, and is remarkable for his ferocious disposition.

In 1833, a gentleman having taken up a black labourer belonging to Steelfield estate, of which Mr. Miller, jun. is attorney, and having sent him as a deserter to Mr. Miller's house, Mr. Miller walked deliberately to the door, and desiring the man who was in charge of the hospital to bring four people and his whip, he first turned to the poor runaway, and said, "I will now suck your blood, you ——;" and then turning his attention to the four men who had been brought from the hospital, he had him laid down and flogged before his eyes to such a degree, that he was carried to the hospital, where he shortly afterwards died. This person is now an extensive attorney:—how far he deserves to be trusted with such an office, I leave my readers to judge.

Mr. James M'Donald, who also lived in the parish of Trelawney, was, next to Mr. William Miller, sen., the most extensive attorney on the

island. The estates of which he was attorney he seldom visited more than once a year, and that was usually at the time of serving out cloth to the labourers. Three-fourths of the estates committed to his charge were involved in ruin. Unwilling to allow his overseers sufficient cattle to produce the requisite supply of manure, the cane land of course grew worse and worse; and in order to keep up the crops, a large number of acres were planted, from which, however, the returns would be scarcely more than adequate to the expence of cultivation; from land, especially in a tropical climate, requiring more than double the amount of labour to produce even less than an average crop. This extra labour was not only attended with increased cruelty, but with a fearful decrease in the amount of labourers and stock. The cause of this decrease, however, was artfully concealed from the proprietors by fictitious entrances in the estate books. But in this plan of procedure

Mr. M'Donald was not peculiar. Most of the overseers in the neighbourhood of the estates under his management causing the blood of the labourers to flow in the cane-fields to such an extent, that hundreds of the unfortunate sufferers, horror-struck at the cracking sound of the whip in the morning, would rush to the woods, and there remain till they perished.

Mr. M'Keoy was joint attorney with Mr. M'Donald for several properties in the parishes of St. Mary and Trelawney. He, like most of the other attorneys, had risen from the rank of book-keeper, from having distinguished himself as a man of an unfeeling and tyrannical disposition. Having left St. Mary's to take charge of York and Gale's Valley estates, the property of Mr. Marrant Gale, he practised the most horrid species of discipline among his labourers. In the course of a single week, he would adopt three or four distinct modes of

punishment; sometimes laying them on a ladder; at other times lashing them to four pegs fastened on the ground; and at others extending the arms and legs between two cart-wheels, so that they might not be able to resist the force of the lash. The daughters and wives of the labourers were obliged to submit to his brutal and lustful caprice; after which, perhaps, in a moment of jealousy, he would strive, upon the slightest deficiency in estate labour, to render them the objects of torture which baffles description. So great was his cruelty on York estate, that he not only nearly annihilated the estate labourers, but he may be regarded as a principal instigator of the disturbances which preceded martial law in 1833;—from his having driven so many labourers into the woods, who, famished with hunger and maddened with revenge, rushed forth from their hiding place, and applied the incendiary torch to the properties of their hated and detestable oppressors, Mr. M'Keoy was

called by the planters, or white people, *Meagre Fury*, a cognomen which he richly merited. The estate is a fine one, and possesses in itself all the elements of improvement, but is one of the worst managed estates in Jamaica.

It would be scarcely credible, except to those who have been eye-witnesses of the fact, that the appointment of book-keepers of such sanguinary dispositions, and unparalleled tyranny, to higher official situations, should have been so uniform; nor can it be accounted for upon any other principle, than that of the ignorance of the proprietors, and the base dissimulation of the men themselves. Were the proprietors acquainted with the true character of their attorneys, I am persuaded that three-fourths of them would never have obtained their appointments; and without the grossest flattery and dissimulation on the part of these attorneys, I am equally persuaded that those appointments



would long since have been annulled. I never knew or heard of a tyrant who was a good planter ; nor do I believe that there is one such in Jamaica at the present moment. In general, they have no knowledge of farming, an essential pre-requisite to the management of the soil, and of the general labour on the estate. A few men versed in the science of farming may be found ; but they, for the most part, are entirely disregarded or unknown. I am, therefore, decidedly of opinion, that there can be no prosperity to the country, so long as the present race of planters are entrusted with the sole management of the estates.

It is needless here to say much of Mr. John Blair, as he has been already described in a former page <sup>or page 60.</sup>—suffice it to say, therefore, that he received all his attorneyships on the ground of his merciless employment of the cart-whip.

Mr. Bridge and Mr. William Carey are two gentlemen of the old school planters, and are now attorneys for York and Gale's Valley estates. They are at this time making about ninety hogsheads of sugar on an estate which is at present capable of producing one hundred and forty; and besides, by a different management, the above estate might be made worth from ten to fifteen per cent more, to the present proprietor.

Mr. John Haughton James is attorney for several estates in the parishes of Trelawney, St. James, and Hanover. Wakefield estate, Trelawney, is under his control. I visited that property in 1837, accompanied by a neighbouring overseer, to whom I can refer for the accuracy of the following statement. The overseer of that property was a young man who had no knowledge whatever of planting. As a proof of this, he had determined at once to cut down

the cane, and set on the mill to work ; but had not a single cart on the estate, to convey the cane from the field. In reply to some of our observations, he told us that he hoped to borrow carts from some of the neighbouring estates ; but, as every one at all acquainted with planting must know, the risk to the crop in such a case would be immense :—its remaining but one day beyond its proper time in the field, would render it totally unfit for sugar. It must, therefore, having been ground at the mill, be sent to the still-house to make rum, at great loss to the proprietor. On this property there was a change of overseer every second or third month. The overseer's house was entirely uninhabitable ;—the mill-house, the boiling-house, the still-house and the trash-shed, were in a state of complete dilapidation ; and the woods, walls, fences, and pasture grounds, on every part of the estate, were most shamefully neglected. At the same time, supposing all these things to have been

kept in repair, the crop did not exceed more than one-third of what might annually have been expected. Such are the lamentable consequences of absentee proprietors entrusting the management of their estates to unskilful and uninterested persons.

Mr. William Cary is an eminent attorney in the parish of Trelawney; one upon whom the proprietors rely for straightforward and honorable actions. I will make a few remarks on the moral conduct of this praise-worthy gentleman, and leave the reader to decide for himself on the character of men in authority and in good report in Jamaica. Mr. Cary is attorney for Spring Vale Pen, the property of Messrs. Aloes, Steele, and Harrison. On this estate there was a very fine effective jobbing gang:—Mr. Cary ordered them to go and clear pastures on New Canaan estate, a property of Lord St. Vincent's, on which he was also attorney. They consisted of

35 in number, and worked at the rate of 2s. 6d. per day, at that time the established price for day labour on light work. After being thus employed for a short period, Mr. Cary ordered them to digging cane-holes on the same estate, giving them still no more than 2s. 6d. per day each labourer. It must be understood, that the digging of land into cane-holes, is the most severe labour that belongs to a sugar estate, and is consequently twice as expensive as any other labour.

In this way, Mr. Cary was sacrificing the interests of Messrs. Aloes, Steele and Harris, to the extent of £4 12s. 6d. per day, for the benefit of Lord St. Vincent; for the laying grounds into cane-holes in Trelawney, at that time, would have cost, by any other undertaker, £9. per acre instead of £4 7s. 6d. This labour was performed on Congowill-piece, in the middle of October, 1835. I will farther remark, that

Mr. Cary, at one period, had a stud of horse stock on the Guinea-grass pastures of Spring Vale Pen ; and with this I think he might have been content, without taking from that property thirty-five labourers, to work at 2s. 6d. per day in digging cane-holes, while such labourers could earn from 5s. to 6s. per day for their master, and something for themselves besides, on task work, according to custom.

The charge against Mr. Cary, therefore, on this occasion, is not merely that of robbing his master, but also that of acting cruelly and oppressively to the labourers.

I have been eye-witness to the proceedings of the same gangs from Spring Vale Pens, in digging cane-holes on York estate, while I was employed as head book-keeper in lining out the ground for the gang. The work done on this property was done in the most shameful man-

ner, and most destructive to the interests of the proprietor, Mr. Morant Gale. Several of the cane-holes were only from 2½ to 4 inches deep, instead of from 6 to 8. The estates labourers were obliged to re-dig the cane-holes before planting. The highest amount for labour was at the same time paid. This was on Gutter-piece, in November, 1835.

With regard to chicanery, I will state no more at present; but I must beg to trespass a little more on the time of the reader, while I relate what even some planters considered *a little* cruel.—Mr. Cary was overseer on Guara-deau estate, some years ago; and here first distinguished himself as a planter, by the adoption of the following plan.

There are labourers now alive, who well remember the day when their 'flesh was worn on the grinding-stone of that estate, by Mr. Wil-

liam Cary's *orders*, in precisely the same manner that a piece of iron or steel would be ground by any of the labourers. He was, last year, appointed attorney for this estate; and I trust he will not again adopt the plan of *grinding* human flesh.

I have to apologize to the reader for relating so many unnatural and cold-blooded crimes, which, in the recital, makes my own blood run cold. I have been impelled to it by the general conduct of the planters, who have ever shown a determination to crush to the earth every one, but those who were professionally, heartless assassins.

Mr. William Tharp is an extensive attorney for several estates, seven of which are situated in Trelawney, adjoining each other. The annual return of the whole crops would not exceed what could be obtained from one of the estates



by a careful mode of cultivation : as an instance of this let the reader observe the following:—

There were twenty-five acres of land dug into cane holes on Covey estate, and planted with cane which received the benefit of good seasons; when this piece was cut and manufactured into sugar, it only made two hogsheads and a half, whereas, if properly cultivated,, dug and planted, with cane, and afterwards received equal benefit of seasons—it would have made at least from fifty to seventy hogsheads, instead of two and a-half. Mr. Tharp keeps a mistress on every property for which he is concerned, under whose influence both overseer, and book-keepers are constantly liable to be discharged. The estates under his direction are fast falling into ruin; while he, Mr. Tharp, is annually amassing 'a princely fortune—he keeps a butchery of his own, and supplies the different properties he has charge of, with

abundance of fresh beef. I quote this merely as a hint to the absent proprietors, for this mode of disposing of fresh beef, is general amongst attornies; to suit their own interests, at the expense of the absentee proprietors.

### St. Thomas-in-the-Vale.

Mr. George William Hamilton, formerly a book-keeper, but who afterwards became the agent of several estates in the above parish, was a man of liberal education and gentlemanly demeanour; forming, in this respect, a complete contrast to his brother attorneys. He had great interest at home, and owed his elevation to that single circumstance. I have no wish to impeach him personally of cruelty; but I cannot acquit him of conniving at the shocking barbarities which were practised on the estates.

His plan was, to look to the overseers for good crops; at the same time empowering them to act in what way they pleased:—so that the overseers produced a good sugar crop, they were left to act, in all other respects, as they thought proper. The complaints of the labourers, upon these estates, against the overseers, was a mere farce:—no redress was ever obtained. So far from this, the labourer, who should be so unfortunate as to dare to prefer a complaint, would at once be a marked man, and would speedily be arraigned and punished for crimes of which he was as clear as the riven snow. Mr. Hamilton's overseers were generally the worst planters I ever knew; and, from the advantage they took of that gentleman's non-interference with the practical management of the estates, they succeeded in bringing no less than ten in that one parish to entire destruction. Some of these estates I have known to pass through several hands in a very short

time; and even to this day there are no divisions between cane-fields and pasture land, and the provision grounds are all lying in a wild state.

### Parish of St. Mary.

Mr. Abraham Hudson, father-in law to Mr. Philpotts, in Fenchurch-street, was one of the principal attorneys of the above parish; and from keeping a store in connection with his other duties, made a princely fortune. He was an exceedingly dangerous person to deal with. Many of the brown people, who resided in Mr. Hudson's neighbourhood, and who had slaves of their own, from dealings at his store, which were far from honourable, became involved, and were under the necessity of making a transfer of their human flesh and blood to liquidate his claims. His name stinks in the neighbourhood;

and for several miles round will be execrated by the orphans upon whose property he rapaciously and unjustly seized. But conscience is a faithful monitor; and never was this more strikingly exemplified than in the case of this tyrant, who, under the tremendous load of a guilty and burdened conscience, retired to a wood, and applied the instrument of destruction to his throat—but, by means of his dog, was miraculously preserved.

But, to leave Mr. Hudson, the attorneys in this parish generally empowered their overseers to act in the most tyrannical manner; so much so, indeed, that it was far from unusual for them to flog the labourers almost to death. Should any thing happen to go wrong on the estate, by which any of the overseers were to be brought into difficulties at a distant period, this was sure to be avenged upon the head people in a ten-fold degree. In fact, so great was the mis-

management and tyranny, that, but for the superior soil of the parish, the estates would be scarcely worth their acceptance as a present.

Mr. Laws, one of the attorneys of St. Mary's, had the management of several properties in this parish; and as I was informed by his own overseers, he purchased cattle from the estates, for which he was concerned, at from five to six pounds per head, being meagre stock, and after a period of three months sold them back to the same estate at twenty-five pounds per head: but, as this is so general a practice in Jamaica, it, scarcely perhaps deserves to be noticed.

### Parish of St. James.

Mr. Irving, in addition to other agencies, was attorney on the Sutherland estate, in the parish of St. James. After the proclamation of martial

law in 1833, being aware that he should lose the attorneyship of Sutherland, he drove the cattle which belonged to the estate into Westmoreland, and other places; and, having disposed of them, he put the proceeds into his own pocket, and some time afterwards left the country. The property, of course, was nearly laid waste.

### Parish of St. Anne's.

Mr. Hyatt, of Hyatt's-field estate, in St. Anne's parish, came to Jamaica in the capacity of a groom; but, having directed his attention to planting, and having distinguished himself by his chicanery and cruelty, he soon rose to the rank of attorney; and, from the emoluments of the estates entrusted to his management, he succeeded, in a few years, to purchasing three estates of his own. He died, leaving an immense property to his natural children, and to many of his relations in England.

I cannot here forbear noticing the introduction of a species of fraud to the notice of my readers, which I do not hesitate to say is general throughout the island. It is the business of the attorney to purchase the whole stock, such as steers, and mules for the estates. He may at this time perhaps, be in want of a few well-bred horses or mules for his own private use. He goes to a proprietor of the pen, and selects such horses or mules as may suit his purpose; and then proposes to take a large number of horned stock, on consideration of his being allowed to take his own at a sum which is far below their real value. The pen-keeper, perhaps, to save appearances, at first refuses; but it is ultimately arranged that the whole, horse stock and mules shall be taken at one price and that the horned cattle shall be reckoned to the estate at so much per head; a sum, in all probability, exceeding their real value by two or three pounds a-piece. By this plan, the attorney always gets bargains from the pen-



keepers; but they are bargains which are purchased at a heavy expence to the estate. The attorney, it is true, does not always appear as the principal in these kinds of negotiations; for, in many cases, he leaves them to the management of his overseers, or other confidential persons, who are less scrupulous, perhaps, as to the bargain they agree for.

Let it be understood that pen-keepers, in Jamaica, mean graziers, who are generally either attorneys, or old overseers, who made their fortunes while in charge of properties belonging to their absentee proprietors. They generally reside on their pens, after purchasing them. Many of them keep a butchery, for the purpose of supplying other properties who have no butcheries established in their employ.—Arrangements are made for the supplying of all such properties with a certain number of pounds of beef weekly, say from forty to sixty

pounds, according to the number of servants on the estate. This arrangement is made on a very liberal scale, to suit the interests of both the parties concerned. Some of the meagre working stock, belonging to the estates, have to be sold annually. The estates' attorney sells these to the pen-keepers at a couple of pounds under their intrinsic value; after which he purchases, from the same pen-keeper, cattle and mules for working on the estates under his charge; and for these he agrees to give two or three pounds more than their value. By this method, the proprietor of the pen and butchery does well, from the extravagant supply of his beef. By the sale of his working stock at an exorbitant price, and the purchase of meagre stock at an inferior price, the pen-keeper is left in the receipt of a thousand pounds a year, out of the properties of the absentee proprietors. Immediately after this, the worthy estate's attorney selects for himself some fine bred horses and draft mules

He takes them at the same price as what he paid for the common mules for the estates; and, in a month or two after, he sells them for three times the amount he paid for them. By this piece of policy he makes fully five hundred a year out of the pen-keeper. Such transactions are termed in Jamaica, "hand go, hand come;" meaning, if you assist me, I will assist you.

There are other estates' attorneys who have, pens of their own, whereon they keep a butchery, and an overseer to superintend it, who takes good care to dispose of all the beef he kills, by sending, at different times, to the estates under the control of his employer, twice the quantity of beef required, knowing that the overseers of the properties dare not grumble, either at the quantity or quality. In these supplies, I have frequently seen fresh beef sent to estates not much better than horse-flesh. In fact, the proceedings of the planting attorneys are so inter-

woven with intrigue and extortion, as to be totally destructive of the interest of the absentee proprietor.

The merchant, mechanic, master of labouring gangs, medical attendant, and others, are all ready, at a word, to assist the planting attorney in his plans of speculation;—in return for which, they receive abundant compensation in various ways.

It is my determination to give a full description of overseers Towards this purpose, I have first to remark, that most of the planting attorneys are men who have distinguished themselves by forcing labour in making large crops. In accomplishing this, both negroes and stock have been killed, and innumerable barbarities have been committed.

If an overseer were to pursue any other line

of conduct than that of the ruffianly routine of his violent and savage employer, he would not only be discharged, but destroyed in reputation ; and would most probably be reduced to the situation of a book-keeper, and be loaded with cruelty and oppression to his grave. No overseer dare marry, or perform any act dictated by honour and prudence. On the heads, therefore, of the attorneys fall the shame of the murders of the slaves, the robbery and swindling committed on the merchants and the orphans under their charge, and should consign them to eternal infamy.

Mr. Charles Smith is attorney for Richmond estate, in the above parish. Banks, Blenheim, and the Cranbrook estates are also under his control. There are not worse managed properties, however, in the whole island than those three latter estates, although there is as superior land belonging to those pro-

perties abutting the road-side as is to be found in Jamaica. The overseer of Llandovery takes from that estate from fifteen to twenty bags of pimento yearly, as his perquisites. From the Cranbrook estate, which adjoins Llandovery, the overseer, Mr. James Lowe, who is a relation of Mr. Smith, is allowed to take thirty bags :—of this I myself was witness, in 1829. It is also generally said that Mr. Smith allows Mr. Barnsley, overseer of Blenheim, to do the same ; and, in fact, that it was a practice he invariably pursued himself upon the Richmond estate. It is surprising how absentee proprietors can thus suffer themselves to be pilfered and robbed ; and especially by servants in the capacity of attorneys and overseers, whose salaries, together with the accommodation provided, amount to little less than one thousand pounds per annum. This can be accounted for in no other way, than by the decep-

tion practised upon them by the letters of their agents. Mr. Smith is supposed, at the present time, to be worth twenty thousand pounds sterling, independent of landed and other property; and his overseers, by these and other pilfering habits, have succeeded in amassing considerable wealth.

### Westmoreland Estate.

Mr. M'Neil is attorney for several estates in this parish. His habits are exceedingly disgraceful and profligate. He also keeps a mistress on every estate for which he is concerned, although he has a large full-grown family of his own. He is also a great admirer of the ladies of the overseers; and it is an understood matter, that the overseer who winks at his immoral domestic intrusions, may manage the estates in any way best suited to his interests. So galling

and painful are these habits to the minds of the poor labourers, many of whom have been raised to a high state of moral and religious feeling by the influence of the missionaries, that they must, unless discountenanced and checked, prove highly injurious to the interests of the absentee proprietor. After this exposure, the folly and sin of countenancing such men must in a great measure lie at his own door.





## HABITS AND MANAGEMENT OF OVERSEERS.

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In the establishment of an overseer, there were usually from ten to twenty servants in constant attendance, of whom by far the greater part were females, who were expected on all occasions to yield their persons to his wishes. A refusal to comply with his desires would be followed by their being sent into the field, to common labour, where they would be exposed, not only to the lash of the whip, but also to the improper desires of the

driver, who generally cohabited with most of the females of his gang. Should they still determine to resist these unlawful demands upon their persons, the driver, under the known sanction of the overseer, was at liberty to cut or lash them, or even to place them in irons, under the pretext of insolence or inattention to work. Neglect, or disobedience of orders, was the common excuse of the driver to the overseer,—of the overseer to the attorney,—and of the attorney to the absentee proprietor, for any peculiar acts of cruelty of which they might have been guilty. The unfortunate sufferers, therefore, had none to whom they could complain. After their day's work in the field, they were compelled, perhaps, to return to the dungeon at night, where they remained in irons, nursing the wounds they had received during the day. In some cases this punishment was not confined to the resisting female herself, but was extended to her parents and relatives, and especially

when they were suspected to encourage her to retain her chastity inviolate.

I have known many instances, in which a cook having displeased the overseer by not making his coffee sufficiently palatable, has been compelled to drink the whole of it herself before his eyes, and that, too, with as much nauseating medicine as would have been sufficient to kill an European.

The house servants were very much exposed to complaints: whenever a plate, dish, cup, or any other article of crockery was broken, the servant who had done this was at once obliged to replace it, or have her days stopped, until the price of it was paid up. Some parents, who had children in the house, would meet so frequently with accidents of this kind, that they would be deprived of their days for three months; during the whole of which time, from an inability to

attend their provision-grounds, they were either literally starving, or were dependent upon their black relations for support. Many of the overseers were satisfied with thus stopping their days until the amount was paid; but there were others who flogged them first, and compelled them to pay afterwards.

When any one of them had killed a hog, a sheep, or other small stock, it was customary for the overseers to dine together; and on such occasions they would leave for their book-keepers, food that was scarcely fit for a dog. Some of them, too, would carry the key of the liquor case; thus leaving them without the means of obtaining their customary beverage, At night, perhaps, they would return home in a state of beastly intoxication. All the head people are at the door, waiting for his orders, on some occasions, perhaps, till two or three o'clock in the morning. Some of them,

in such a state, perhaps, may give their orders and retire to rest; but others, would enquire whether any thing has gone wrong through the day; and, before they retire, would have some of the domestics put in irons for the most trifling offences. Sometimes, in this state of inebriation, they discharge their book-keepers, and commit various other disgraceful acts, of which they have no recollection on the following morning. At other times, two or three of them coming in company together, the resident overseer calls for egg-punch, and directs the young females upon the estate at once to be assembled together, for the purpose of a dance. Debauchery of the most horrid kind succeeds, not only on the part of the overseer himself, but also on the part of his guests; and in many cases, on the part of the book-keepers, who are called in to assist in the joviality of the evening. Such meetings were oftentimes kept up till four o'clock in the morning; at which time the

slaves and book-keepers should at once depart for their work : and in case any such females as were at the dance on the previous evening should be late at their field-work, they would have to pay the dreadful penalty, by a sacrifice of their flesh and blood. Many young females have been known to lose their lives by these evening sports ; while to others they have been the precursors of diseases which have embittered the whole of their remaining days.

The overseers in Jamaica generally kept one particular mistress, called by themselves "house-keepers," but by the labourers their "wives." Such women, in many instances, were the instruments of much of the cruelty and robbery which was practised on the estate. Under the management of such a person, and especially when any real or supposed umbrage has been given, the table appointments are so bad, and in some cases so scanty, that the book-keepers

and other white servants in the house, are obliged to order from their merchant, with whom they have always an account, little necessaries for themselves. The herrings that are sent for the use of the labourers are frequently wasted, in the overseer's house, at the rate of a dozen or twenty per day : besides which, during crop-time, they are given to meagre stock. For every trifling thing that was stolen, and for even the slightest act which occasioned the displeasure of the overseer, the herrings were generally stopped ; so that the labourers are supposed, by the proprietors at home, to have had twice the quantity of provisions they ever received.

The same plan was pursued, in reference to the serving of cloth. Eight or ten yards would, to all appearance, be measured with great exactness on the floor ; but when the labourers came to carry home their allowance, it was



found to have been cut considerably short. All the pieces of extra cloth were carefully laid up by the overseer's mistress, and, of course, well appropriated to her own use. The blankets which were sent out for the mothers of children were sometimes converted into saddle-cloths; but more frequently, in crop time, they were used as bags, through which the cane liquor was strained, from the syphon to the grand copper. A few, indeed many, have been given to some of the overseer's friends; but by far the greater number were appropriated to the purposes we have mentioned, or, through wanton negligence, were suffered to remain in the stores, until they were destroyed by the moths, which soon takes place in a tropical climate.

In 1836 I saw with my own eyes blankets thrown away, upon the York estate, in Trelawney; and, from residing at that time upon the estate, I have reason to know, that

the long ells, which should have been served out that year, remained in the stores in 1837; and, contrary to the expectations of the proprietors, were not even then served out.

It is impossible for any book-keeper, driver, pen-keeper, over-looker, head-herdsman, or domestic, to live with an overseer, with any degree of comfort to himself, except he be ready, on all occasions, to confirm, either by word or oath, whatever the overseer may wish, whether it be right or wrong. This subjugation to the authority, and concurrence in the feelings and wishes of the overseers, was found to be necessary, as a cloak to the illicit practices to which he sometimes resorted.

Most of the overseers were in the habit of selling corn, and sometimes small stock, belonging to the estate, under the pretence of providing necessities for the house; when, in

reality, it was only to supply either himself or his concubine with articles of dress. In consideration of shoes, stockings, or other articles of wearing apparel, it was by no means unusual to forward to the merchant a puncheon of corn, which of course was so much value deducted from the proprietor's estate. I wish now to be understood as speaking of overseers who were the particular friends of the attorneys, in whose hands, perhaps, they had lodged money to a considerable amount. Such persons could do as they wished with the estate. As a proof of this, I knew an overseer, named Melburn, who had the management of a pen in St. Dorothy's, called Thetford to have no less than twenty-eight head of his own horse-stock upon the pasture-land at a time. One of these horses, thus fed at the expence of the proprietor, I myself purchased from him.

It is usual with an overseer to be up and

out by four o'clock in the morning, to see that the book-keepers and labourers are all at their posts in time. He would first gallop to the cattle pens, and then to the gang, where the list of names was at once called over :—so far the early hours and diligent attendance of the overseers are commendable. It is not with these, but with the scenes of cruelty that follow, against which I wage war. The list is called over ; and two or three of the labourers are at the time, at a distance of no more than two or three yards from their work. No intreaties can save them. The driver receives his orders, and the poor wretch is stretched upon the ground, and has his flesh torn and mangled by the merciless whip. It is at the peril of the driver that he attempt to spare the unfortunate victim :—this would be to subject himself to the punishment he should have inflicted on the rest. I have seen the big tear roll down the cheek of a powerful and athletic man, at the prospect of this

punishment; and I have seen him afterwards writhing in agony upon the ground, from the intensity of his sufferings, occasioned by his old wounds (which had not had time to heal) being opened afresh. And where a young man or a young woman were remarkable for the cleanliness of their persons, I have seen the most miry and filthy spot selected, as that upon which it was most fit to inflict this sanguinary punishment. Many of them, from the effects of these wounds, were under the necessity of being immediately conveyed to the hospital.

No European, who has not visited that country, can form an idea of what a Jamaica hospital really is. All persons in the hospital afflicted with ulcers, up to the time of the apprenticeship act, were flogged every Monday morning until the ulcers got better, and the patient was enabled to leave. The reason assigned for this was, lest they should neglect the use of the

remedies prescribed, and spend the time in the hospital which they should employ in the field. Many such persons, therefore, dreading the weekly punishment, concealed their wounds; in consequence of which, inflammation increased to such an extent, that they were at last obliged to submit to the amputation of the diseased limb:—this, of course, was a loss to the property, and certain ruin to the labourer himself: discipline of this kind was customary on every estate; so much so, that I defy any planter to deny it:—it was called planter's medicine.

When a few able-bodied slaves, as would sometimes be the case, visited the hospital, in the hope of getting some simple medicine, such as a dose of salts, I have known them to get from forty to fifty grains of jalap, in a tumbler of water, by which their indisposition would be rather aggravated than diminished! and I have heard it stated, again and again, as a reason for

this conduct, that it was done with the design of rendering the slaves disgusted with the hospital. This wanton cruelty has, however, at times been carried too far; for, in some instances, it has terminated in death.

It was customary to brand, with a hot iron, or with a silver mark, the different slaves who were peculiarly obnoxious to the overseer. To witness such a sight would make one's flesh crawl upon one's bones; and yet they were far from unfrequent.

To say what time was allowed to the labourers for rest, during the gathering of the crop, is scarcely possible. They were on spell from twelve o'clock in the day until twelve o'clock at night; after which they were permitted to go to their houses; but, however great the distance, they must be at their work again by day-break in the morning. There were no other

hours of rest, except at the risk of the severest punishment. Many of the book-keepers in crop time, from want of rest, grew sick and died; being subject to the visits of the overseer at all hours of the night, endeavouring to catch some of them asleep.

It was the constant practice of the overseer, not only in crop time, but the whole year round, to keep his book-keepers at work on the Sabbath; whilst he himself was spending those hours in card-playing, drunken carousals, and debauchery. This was the general practice throughout the island, up to the time of the arrival of the missionaries; after which, it was in some measure abated.

I shall now give a few cases, illustrative of the cruelties and knavery of the overseers, which are the result of several years' observation.



### Parish of St. Ann's.

The overseer of Bank's estate, in the parish of St. Ann's, was a Mr. M'Kenzie. Mr. Currie was at the time his book-keeper, and was present when Mr. M'Kenzie was going to supper; at which, after sitting down, a fork having fallen to the ground, he seized hold of the boy who was in attendance, and whose name was Wellington, and by striking him against the leaf of the table, disfigured his mouth and destroyed his teeth.

Mr. Phillips, in the year 1830, was overseer of the Llandovery estate, in the above parish. In crop-time he was in the habit of visiting the gang in the fields in the afternoons, carrying with him a large stick, with which he would beat the labourers from right to left with his

own hand. He would then return to the mill-house, where he would force the feeding of the mill, until all the coppers in the boiling-house would be flowing over. This would expose the boilers and stokers to the severity of his displeasure: but, to avoid this, they contrived to open the syphons, and to convey the superfluous liquor into the still-house; by which means they managed to keep the vessels in the boiling-house empty, but at an extraordinary loss to the estate. Mr. Charles Moulton was his book-keeper at the time; and has empowered me to say, that he is willing to attest the above upon oath.

Mr. Donald Cameron was overseer and attorney for Cave Valley estate, in the above parish. Isaac Higgins was his co-attorney. In order to force the work upon this estate, Cameron, on visiting the gang, would stand behind one of the strongest of the labourers, and urge him

forward, to the utmost degree of his ability, for two, or perhaps three or four hours. Of course the rest of the gang, in dread of the lash, would strain every nerve to keep up with the labourer who was thus urged forward by the overseer. Mr. Cameron would then step the ground, and, on having taken his land-marks, would leave the driver in charge of the men, pointing out to him the extent of work they had done under his own surveillance, and telling him that he should expect the same proportion throughout the day, or, perhaps, throughout the whole week. It was at the driver's peril to suffer them to flag. The clothes were cut off the poor labourers' backs, and the whip was used whilst one remained in the field to be whipped:—many, who were unable to keep up with the rest of the gang, although severely flogged, were afterwards compelled to remain, and finish their work. By this method of forcing work, Cameron secured for himself the name of an able planter ;

and eventually succeeded in obtaining the attorneyships of four or five properties.

There was another overseer, also, whose name I do not remember ; but he is now in the employ of George Gordon, esq., in the parish of Hanover, and Mr. England jun. was his book-keeper in January 1838. Some years ago, this overseer seized hold of a fine negro in the boiling-house, and threw him into a cooler of hot sugar; immediately after it had been taken from the fire, and when, consequently, its heat was equal to that of boiling lead. Of this atrocious murder no notice was taken by the authorities; and, as an index to the state of public feeling, it is sufficient to remark, that the man, upon whose head the blood of the murdered negro rests, now ranks amongst the most respectable planters on the island.

### Parish of St. Mary's.

On one of the estates of Mr. Nathaniel Baylie, near Port Marie, there was an overseer in the employ of Mr. Henry Cox, whose name was Farrel. This man, having taken some umbrage at one of the negroes upon the estate, he first punished him, and afterwards clapped him into irons. He then tied his great toes together, and twisted the cord tight with a small stick. He then pinioned him; and, having fastened his thumbs in a similar manner, he left him in this position during the whole night. When the book-keeper went to release him from the stocks in the morning, he found that the poor man was deprived of the use of his limbs; and so he continued for the remainder of his life. Mr. Cowan, my informant, resided on the estate at the time this melancholy occurrence took place.

In 1818, Mr. Nicholas Gyles was overseer of Halifax estate, in the above parish. His disposition was cruel in the extreme. No man ever made larger crops of sugar : but, to effect this, he nearly destroyed the whole of the estate labourers by his tyrannical and oppressive conduct. Many of them were chained together while at work ; and at night remained in the dungeon, with irons upon their necks and feet. Their food was either raw corn, or plantains, which was greedily devoured, without any kind of cooking. After six hours' rest, they were again taken out of the dungeon, and driven by the whip until the following night. From fifteen to twenty of them were worked by Mr. Gyles the whole year round, Sundays not excepted, in the manner I have described. The dungeon was under ground, and had the most loathsome appearance. I have heard effective labourers say, that they did not think they could survive in it for one day. Mr. Gyles at this

time had a savage African, who was in the habit of visiting the dungeon in which these poor creatures were lodged, and of carrying with him a pair of pincers, with which he pulled the hair from their heads. As an additional torture, he would sometimes employ this fearful instrument to flay their skin from their flesh. This driver was not only esteemed by Mr. Gyles for his cruelties, but was rewarded with innumerable little indulgences. After some years, however, Mr. Gyles himself was discharged; when it was found that the estate labourers were not only in a state of the most wretched debility, but, with a very few exceptions, were actually without any children to supply their place. Such are the fearful consequences of the cruelty which is resorted to for the forcing of crops, and the necessary results is the destruction of the estates capital by death of the labourers and stock,

### Parish of St. George.

Mr. Sprowl is now overseer of Lowlayton estate, in the parish of St. George, and is a man well known for his severity to all who are under his control. His neighbours who required to see him in the morning, were accustomed to go, where they heard the cracking of the whip;—there he was sure to be found, butchering one half of his gang. Seldom were they to be seen going to their work, except in a crippled state. In 1829, the unfortunate labourers, from this continued severity, were unable to do one half of the work upon the estate; and as for an increase, it was not to be expected; for the women on all sides were to be heard expressing the hope, that they should have no children to be cut up before their eyes in so barbarous a manner. Mr. Sprowl is, without exception, one of



the most cruel and short-sighted men I have ever known. He has, however, saved a handsome fortune, by laying up the whole of his salary, and by extensive dealings in horse-stock. To my own knowledge, he had £500 worth of his own horse-stock on the estate, and two of the estate negroes constantly attending them.

### Parish of Trelawney.

Mr. Barnet was a married gentleman, and proprietor of the Hopewell and Manchester estates, then called Mark Cave Coffee Plantation. Mr. Charles Lewis, also a married man was his overseer ; but, from improper conduct with the female servants, his wife was compelled to leave him.

Mr. Barnet was a simple minded and good-natured man, but entirely ignorant of the intrigues

of the planters. His overseer, Lewis, had an acquaintance, named Cunningham, who was exceedingly desirous of purchasing the Hopewell and Manchēster estates. He proposed for these estates, but his proposal was rejected. Lewis, the overseer, now set his wits to work on behalf of his friend; and in this he was aided by Mr. Barnet's ignorance of plantership. Lewis planted cane in all the inferior land on the estates and he cleared the cane-fields only at the roadside, and by intervals. He next cut down wood-land, established grass-pieces, enclosed the cane-pieces by walls, repaired the work-tanks, trash-houses, and all the offices on estates. In fact, every thing was attended to, but the crop. Of course there was a failure there, from this wanton neglect. He then represented to Mr. Barnet that the estate, in his opinion, would never pay for future labour. This opinion, to all appearance being confirmed by the failure of the crops for

two or three successive years, he found no difficulty in persuading him to sell it to his friend, Mr. Cunningham, for one-tenth of its value. Lewis then got more cattle, and prepared very extensive cane-fields; by which, in the first year, he doubled his crop; and in the second, he trebled that of the first year: thus rendering it sixfold as productive as under the former proprietor; and in this state it continued for several successive years.

The above transaction, required the attention of the absent proprietor; for at the present there are such schemes in general operation, as will not fail to bring estates to the hammer; if the old planters, are not immediately relieved from the charge of properties, now under their care: the intention of attornies, overseers, and tradesmen, are to bring the properties of absent proprietors to ruin, in the hope, that by such artifice they may purchase the land for a trifle of its value.

Lewis was generally understood to have had a guarantee from Mr. Cunningham, that, in the event of his getting the estate, Lewis should hold his present berth as long as he lived. His character was base in the extreme. The heinous nature of his crimes were sufficient to have drawn down the vengeance of Heaven upon the whole district! He was a terror alike to the black and the white; and, as a consummation of his wickedness, he kept a seraglio of seventeen persons, among whom were mothers, and their daughters, sisters, and nieces, all of the same family.

Such are the revolting and heart-rending details of the habits and conduct of Jamaica overseers. It would be easy to swell them to an almost indefinite length; but I forbear.



**BOOK-KEEPERS.**

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Book-keepers were employed on estates, or other properties, to superintend domestic and field labour in all its branches. Their business consisted in reckoning up and making out a list of stock of every description for the overseer; in preparing and forwarding to the attorney a diary of every week's labour; and in attending the cattle-pens, small stock, and provision-grounds, under the direction of the overseer. From preparing the lists for the attorney, the book-keepers were generally employed more on the Sunday than on any other day of the week.

When sick, the book-keepers were left almost entirely unnoticed : their food ~~is~~<sup>was</sup> of the most inferior kind, and their bed-chambers filthy in the extreme. Though visited by a medical man, who prescribes the needful remedy, it seldom happens that any thing is administered but doses of calomel and jalap ; after which he is left in his bed, without any one to assist him to so much as a drink of water. I speak now from experience. From the kind feelings of the domestics, they may sometimes go to the overseer, and say, “ Busha, poo massa book-keepa—him berry sick—him quite low—nobody at-alla at-alla in him room—him room quite nasty—him no ably to help himself. My good busha—him will die—a lilly mo him die dis morning.” To this the overseer replies, “ Go to the hospital—send one for the doctor—and get another idler from there to clean out his room before the doctor comes. D—n the fellow—he was well enough a few days ago.” “ My good

busha," replies the domestic, "we know alla could be dead since dary."—The doctor arrives, pronounces his patient in a dangerous state, and holds out but little hope of his recovery. For the first, time, the overseer begins to believe that he is sick, and, visiting his room, perhaps orders him a little chicken broth, just at the moment he is about to expire. The man dies. The overseer then visits his room again; takes an inventory of his various articles of wearing apparel; gives direction about his interment; and, in about a month afterwards, he disposes of all his effects. In making up the expences of the funeral, the overseer, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, takes care that they cover the amount of the deceased's assets. A desire for the possession of the property of a book-keeper has made many a cold-blooded and assassin-hearted overseer accessory to his death.

If a book-keeper went to church or chapel on



the sabbath-day, he would be called a preaching scamp, and might expect his discharge as the consequence: or if the black labourers spoke kindly of him, he would be exposed to the rancour of the overseer; and, under the character of a negrofied rascal, be dismissed from his employ. The unfortunate man, under such circumstances, rides, in all weathers, from one property to another, in quest of employment, but in vain. He then sells his horse, takes to drink, and becomes a confirmed sot. Thousands have thus been irretrievably ruined!

I cannot here omit to mention one fact, which is notorious in Jamaica, but with which every well-disciplined mind will be shocked. To avoid persecution, book-keepers, following the example of their overseers, generally take to themselves mistresses: but, in extenuation of this moral delinquency, they sometimes urge the necessity of having some one to wash for

them, to clean out their chambers and make up their beds, to take charge of their wearing apparel, and to attend on them when sick. This, however, is no extenuation in the eyes of God or man :—it is a crying abomination, which, though chargeable in some measure to the attorneys and overseers, must still lie at the door of the book-keeper himself. For a book-keeper to have married, it is true, would have secured his discharge; but it was for him to consider, whether it was better to serve God, or bow to the caprice of sinful man.

The successful book-keepers were, in general, a class of men who had left their country with the determination of making a fortune in a slave colony at all risks. They executed with severity all the commands they received from their overseer; and, in company with the neighbouring overseers, they always took care to lavish praises upon their own. This was the high road

to promotion:—cruelty and fawning flattery were the two leading steps to office. A continuance of four or five years in this course would be almost sure to bring the assistant under the notice of some attorney, who would advance him to the rank of overseer. If, in addition to his cruel and cringing disposition, he had a spice of profanity, and could take delight in a midnight debauch, his success was the more certain. I can assert, without fear of contradiction by my fellow planters, that such men, and such men only, were those who obtained lucrative appointments on the island, except in a few cases, indeed, in which the interest of some wealthy merchant was employed. **I RECORD IT TO THE ETERNAL DISGRACE OF HUMANITY, THAT TREACHERY, FRAUD, CRUELTY, AND BESTIALITY, WERE THE ONLY STEPPING STONES TO PREFERMENT.**

## JOBGING GANGS

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I shall here present to my readers a brief account of the manner in which Jobging Gangs were employed, labouring under my own direction and superintendence.

In 1822, I was repairing the road from Bog-Walk to Spanish Town. On Monday morning the labourers had to carry with them the necessary implements, together with a sufficient stock of provisions for the week. They belonged to

Adam Steele, overseer of Byndloss estate, and proprietor of Harmony Hall. The nearest part of the work was ten miles from home, and the most, distant eighteen. They were obliged to be at their work on Monday morning by ten o'clock; otherwise they were ordered to be flogged. Had I neglected to have observed this regulation, I should have been discharged as a worthless fellow, and should have been unable to get another situation on the island. Besides, had the driver neglected to do his duty, he would have exposed himself to double punishment.

Towards the end of the week, provisions generally became scarce, and several of them had to travel from the place of work to the provision-grounds, and there, by moon-light, to pull up the requisite supply of provisions; and having loaded themselves, return to their work. Sometimes this would take them the whole night, and

occasionally more; but if one of them should happen to return later than day-break, he was as deliberately punished, as though it had been occasioned by the grossest neglect. When cases of this kind have come under my notice, I have passed over them with as much secrecy and dread, as though I myself had been guilty of some odious crime.

It has often been said by planters, that one half-day is generally employed by the jobbing gangs in erecting huts to screen themselves from the inclemency of the weather. This I should scarcely have noticed, but with the view of informing my readers as to what these jobbing huts really are.

Sometimes jobbing gangs have only to go to some neighbouring estate, at a distance of from three to four miles from home. In that case, on the first morning they would be able to arrive

at the place of work, with their implements and provisions, as early as eight o'clock. They at once commence building their huts; which is done in the following manner.—Two small stakes, about five feet in length, are procured; one end of which is sharpened to a point, and the other is forked. These two stakes are then driven into the ground, almost perpendicularly, at a distance of about eight feet from each other, and with the forked ends upwards. A rick-pole is then stretched from stake to stake; and from this, on either side, in imitation of the roof of a thatched cottage or cabin, are stretched, in a perpendicular slope, wattles, extending from the rick-pole to the ground. Long grass is thrown over the wattles on either side of this temporary erection; and one end of the hut is then stopped up, the other being left as a place of entrance. The time allowed for making this miserable shed was two hours and a-half; if not finished then, they had to go to work, and finish it

in their own time. Such was the wretched abode of these persecuted men week after week. In case of rain, they were unable even to stretch their wearied limbs upon the ground; but, notwithstanding this, they must be out to perform their accustomed task on the following day. It is a libel upon these poor wretches, therefore, to say that one-half of the day was occupied in making their huts; and it is a misapprehension, of which we wish to disabuse the public mind, to suppose that they are capable of screening them from the inclemency of the weather. In the gang I followed, and in all the gangs I ever saw, it was the practice of the negroes to cover in and finish these miserable huts by night, and consequently, in their own time. And I can further add, that, when jobbing upon the road, and not upon any estate, the gang, of which I had charge, had no huts whatever, but lay under the rocks, and in other cavities: for it must be observed, that permission could not be obtained,



except in very rare instances, to cut grass or other necessities upon the neighbouring estates.

The sufferings of the jobbing gangs, in fact, were so numerous and so great, as to render it impossible, to attempt to exaggerate by any description. Women had to carry their children, in addition to their implements and load of provisions, upwards of ten miles, and yet to be at their work at the appointed hour. If late, no excuse could be taken; thirty-nine lashes would at once be given; and, if attended with a murmur of complaint at the harshness of the treatment, this was followed by thirty-nine more. The very appearance of the gang was distressing:—their tattered rags, —their pale and hungry visages,—their filth, wounds, and scars,—and their crippled forms, arising from a complication of disease, (the result of unparalleled oppression in the days of their youth)—combined with the fact, that a

savage African, or a ferocious Ebo, was now standing at their backs, ready to flay the flesh, and bespatter the ground with the blood of the first who, from fatigue, should dare to place himself in an erect position;—this, I say, would be sufficient to strike horror into the mind of any individual, whose feelings had not been blunted, and whose heart had not been rendered callous, by a personal participation in this brutal, oppressive, and most iniquitous system.

I cannot dismiss this branch of my subject, however, without congratulating my readers upon the fact, that these JOBBING GANGS are at an end, and that all the labourers upon the island, whether men or women, are now *jobbers* for themselves. This is as it should be!

## EXECUTORS.



## Parish of St. Ann's.

In St. Ann's parish, in the island of Jamaica, there lived an old gentleman, whose name was Marshall, and who was proprietor of Ridge Pen and Coffee-walk, two properties which adjoined each other. In his time he was considered one of the most wealthy proprietors in that quarter. Though of a miserly disposition, his house was expensively and splendidly furnished. At the time of his death, he appointed Mr. Utton, of Ballyminor, his executor. Some years afterwards, Mr. Utton's nephew, now Mr. Todd, came

into the country, a mere youngster, and was put into possession of Ridge Pen and Coffee-walk ; together with the negroes, houses, and all the stock. All I know of this matter is, that, on the testimony of white, black, and brown people, the said Mr. Todd is now owner of these properties, without ever paying a fraction in form of purchase. I myself was living, for a time, as overseer with Mr. Todd ; and this was often made a matter of complaint by the deceased's labourers, particularly by one of Mr. Marshall's own domestics, who was also my servant during the time I was Mr. Todd's overseer.

### Parish of Trelawney

At Rio Bueno, in the above parish, there once lived a young man, who is said to have been in the habit of making out wills for different persons of property. Between him and Mr. Frater, now custos of that parish, there was an express

understanding. that, for every will he drew, in which a blank space was left for the insertion of Frater's name, as principal executor, the young man should receive a doubloon, which is equal to four pounds sterling of British money. However poor a man may have previously been, upon his appointment as executor to a wealthy individual, nothing is more common in Jamaica, than for him at once to become rich. Four or five years, at farthest, will raise him from poverty to affluence. The temptation to this misappropriation of trust property, was not, however, confined to the poor. When Mr. Frater, the custos to whom we have already referred, took charge of Mr. Gibbs' Coffee Mountain, he found there a fine effective gang of labourers. The liabilities of that property were exceedingly small, when compared with the gross assets. The produce of two or three years would have been more than sufficient to clear off every charge that was against it. Mr. Frater, however took from

that, and placed upon his own estate, twenty-one fine effective labourers ; at the same time disposing annually of the produce of the pen, leaving the debt upon the property unnoticed, and exposing the young family to all the dangers and degradation of poverty. I can attest this upon my own personal knowledge.

### Parish of St. James.

Some years ago, an old Irish gentleman died in St. James's parish, whose name was Hill, and who, at the time of his death, was supposed to be worth forty thousand pounds. I do not now remember the names of his executors ; but suffice it to say, that they took possession of the whole of his property, never having handed over a farthing to any of his surviving relations. In fact, I feel no hesitation in affirming, that for

the last sixty years, five cases of justice on the part of executors have not been known in Jamaica.

Of all the robberies committed in the island, none have ever affected my mind more deeply than those which are practised upon the poor, young, innocent brown people who are thus thrown from affluence into penury and want. During the life-time of the fathers, they are respected and flattered; but, after his decease, they are neglected, or even shunned. The executors swallow up the whole of the property;—they take all, and give none. The misery inflicted by these rapacious tyrants, if properly described, would cause a heart of stone to bleed. But I feel myself incompetent to such a description.

The case of the Creoles, in almost every in-

stance, is peculiarly distressing, wherever executors are concerned. Thence, the general, but not inapposite remark, so constantly employed by the natives,—WHEN A MAN DIES IN JAMAICA, HE IS RUINED FOR EVER ;—which is as though they said, “ If a man dies worth fifty or sixty thousand pounds, in two or three years after his death, his estate will be declared insolvent by his executors.” Cases are constantly occurring in the island, of the particular friends of the deceased, having come into possession of the property, appropriated the greater part of its proceeds to their own use, by virtue of their executorships, and then take the benefit of the act, and then leave the unfortunate children, with the miserable remnant, in the hands of practised and designing knaves.

Other cases occur, in which the executor of the deceased holds the property in his own hand, and manages it for the children during



their minority. In the case of boys, as soon as they arrive at the age of thirteen, or thereabout, they are indulged in every species of vanity and wickedness. No care whatever is taken of their education. A horse, a watch, a dog, and a gun, are all provided at the first expression of a wish. By the time the youth arrives at age, he is an adept in gambling, horse-racing, cock-fighting, and every species of vice. This executor now presents him with his bill, in which articles with which he has been furnished, are charged at ten times their real value. This is followed by a recommendation to sell out his property, which is said to be of little value, and to take a situation as planter. In conformity with the wishes of his miscalled guardian, and with the most unequivocal assurances that his views shall in every way be promoted, he assigns over his claim. This executor now furnishes him with what he wants; provides him with one or two horses, for which he is charged

at the rate of £100 a-piece, when their intrinsic value is not more than £30; and then, as a means to get rid of one whom he has long felt as a burden, he procures for him a precarious situation. His early habits having unfitted him for business, he is now discharged; when, on his return to his patron, to provide him with another berth, he is told,—“I got you one—why did you not keep it?—I shall give myself no further trouble about you!”—He is then branded as one of the worst characters; is scouted by those with whom he had previously associated; and, as the ultimatum of his wretchedness, is compelled to live with the labourers—the last refuge for injured and plundered children.

But the worst part of the story remains yet to be told.—When young females are left in the charge of executors, they have no sooner arrived at the age of puberty, than every flattering and seductive charm will be presented to the mind,

to induce them to live as mistresses with the man, who was bound, by every principle of honour, to protect them. Old or young, no means will be left unemployed which can possibly aid in the accomplishment of his diabolical design. In too many instances, alas! have such unprotected females fallen victims to this seductive influence, and, after having been despoiled of their honour, have been turned upon the world, to provide, with toil and tears, for the support of their illegitimate offspring:—or, in cases in which the executor has himself been personally successful in his attempts, he has sent them loose upon society, destitute of the common necessities of life, and prepared to fall a victim to the first villain who may cross their path. I do not bring this as a special charge against any particular executor, but I assert it to be the general practice throughout the island. Many a fine youth, with the feelings of patriotism and disgust for the country, struggling for

the ascendancy in his bosom, have I known to abandon his native shores, and go into voluntary exile, rather than be an eye-witness to the plundering rapacity, and brutal licentiousness, practised upon an unsuspecting but affectionate sister, perhaps by an hoary-headed villain, who was about to step into his grave. Many such instances flit before my eye at this moment:—the blood runs cold in my veins at the recital—I lay down my pen.

## PLANTERSHIP.

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To every honest planter it has long been a matter of deep and heart-felt regret, to see the fine estates around them, year after year, sinking into ruin. The cause of this I have already in part explained. No sooner had the friends of humanity in Britain exerted themselves for the complete and unconditional abolition of slavery, with a prospect of immediate success, than the planters in the colonies, anticipating that the day for an onslaught upon

their plundering and nefarious practices was at hand, at once set themselves to work, to promote their own personal and individual interests.—For the last five or six years, the attention paid to the cultivation of the cane-fields has, for the most part, been exceedingly partial; and, consequently, the proprietors at home have made great complaints of the falling off in the exports of sugar from their estates. The planters alleged, as a reason for this, the unfavourableness of the seasons, but more especially the interference of the home legislature, by which, they asserted, that the negroes could not be compelled to yield more than two-thirds of their average labour; whilst the real facts of the case were, that they themselves, instead of attending to the crop, were employing every means in their power to promote their individual interests, and sow the seeds of discord in the country.

As I have hinted above, the destruction entailed upon the estates, by the neglect of cultivation, or by other artifices, has been unjustly attributed to the interference of the true friends of the colonies. To this cause, they assert, all the failure in the crops is to be traced. This has been put forward, not only in their monthly returns to the proprietors, but has been urged in the strongest terms in the House of Assembly. I feel myself called upon to give this charge the most unqualified contradiction. *And more than this. I fearlessly assert, that, the failure has arisen from the fact of their having been so zealously employed in endeavouring to ENRICH themselves, at the expense of their EMPLOYERS.*

I wish here to be understood as addressing myself particularly to West India proprietors at present residing in this country ; and I trust I shall be free from the charge of vanity or egotism, in the statements I am about to put

forward. A residence of upwards of eighteen years in the island of Jamaica alone, enables me to speak with some degree of certainty as to the past, present, and future prospects of the country.

Of late years, it has been the practice of attorneys and overseers, in expectation of some great change in the domestic economy of the country, as far as their means would allow, to purchase land wherever they could get it. Many others, who have taken advantage of the last five or six years to promote their own interests, and who now have money boarded up, are impatiently waiting for an opportunity to invest it in a similar manner. Hence the attempts which have been made to induce the absentee proprietor to suppose, that but little was to be expected from the cultivation of the land, upon the system of free labour. Only let the proprietors, by a want of attention to the



real facts of the case, be driven to despair, and put up their estates for sale ; and these hungry men, like cormorants upon a rock, will be ready to pounce down, and take them at a tithe of their real value. So certain am I of this, that I feel bound to state, that plans to effect it were a matter of serious and grave deliberation among the planters, long before I left the island. If, after this statement, the proprietors in this country still suffer themselves to be hood-winked and cajoled of their property, I shall at least have the satisfaction of knowing that they have done it contrary to such feeble remonstrance as it was in my power to employ.

Hitherto the control exercised by the proprietor over his *employees* in the colonies has been too slight, and of too general a nature, to secure any thing like an effective management of his estate. As a means of correcting this evil, I would advise, that either the following,

or some similar entry, should be made in every plantation book, on every estate, for the guidance of all who may, either now, or at any future period, be employed as attorneys, overseers, or book-keepers.

1. That buildings of every kind on the estate should be kept in good and constant repair, and not on any account be destroyed, without the written sanction of the proprietor.

2. That stone walls, or growing fences, should likewise be kept in good and constant repair; and on no account be removed or destroyed, without such written sanction as above.

3. That stone walls, or growing fences, should be established, for the security of cane-pieces, pasture-lands, and provision-grounds of labourers; and that the boundaries, and particularly the yard and works, should be inclosed, as a

protection against night idlers or others, which might then be easily effected by a couple of dogs.

4. That seeds of all hard woods should be planted on the sides of walls and other fences ; and that a grove of the same should be established where it would admit of waggon carriage.

5. That bread fruit trees, cocoa-nut trees, and others of the fruit kind, be planted in glades, along fence sides, and on other spare grounds, and there to remain unmolested.

6. That the provision-grounds of the labourers should on no account be disturbed or injured, or even changed, except for as good or better, and not even this, without the written sanction of the proprietor.

7. That the cause of the decrease of stock be distinctly stated; and that the age and period of working since purchased, as also the time at which broke for work, be distinctly notified.

And, 8. That during crop-time the still-house book be kept correctly; and that a copy of the same be forwarded to the proprietors monthly, with remarks on the state of the clarifiers, receivers, vats, or cisterns, butts, stills, worms, pumps, and cocks, whether in good or bad repair; with other remarks as the case may require; the same to be attested by the still-house book-keeper at the risk of his salary.

Had the foregoing restrictions been imposed upon the planters ten or twenty years ago, I am confident that the proprietors would now have found their estates equal to ten times their present value. With this attention to general improvement, and with one-third less

labour, more sugar would have been produced, than could ever have been raised by flogging, chaining, or any other species of tyranny under any system of slavery.

I have had occasion, in former parts of this work, to remark upon the destruction of estates by the sanguinary butchery of the present race of planters. At one time an excessive mortality had taken place among the labourers, and had been reported to the proprietor ; but the causes of this mortality have been artfully concealed. Innumerable cases of death, occasioned by the use of the whip, or other sanguinary measures, have been entered in the plantation book as the result of general debility or consumption. At other times, the estate of the absentee proprietor has suffered, from the female labourers on the estate having, for the most part, ceased to bear children. The aged and the infirm were dying off at a much greater rate than children

were rising up to supply their place. On Bloxburgh, Augwalta, Vale, Palm, Chareilton, Crawl, Manchester, Hopewell and on many other estates, pens, and coffee mountains, I have heard with my own ears, again and again, the female labourers saying, that they hoped they never should have children, and that they never would have one if they could help it, to be tortured and cut up at the idle and malicious caprice of a white overseer. But they did not rest in words;—they proceeded to acts. Indiscriminate sexual intercourse on the various properties was without restraint. By this species of delinquency they hoped to succeed; and it is painful to state, that to too great an extent their wishes were realized. A perseverance in this course for a few years would have tended to the depopulation of Jamaica, as certainly as the crime of infanticide tended to the depopulation of the Sandwich islands. Just at this

time the missionaries came and arrested the progress of the alarming evil. At their solici-  
tation the negroes returned to conjugal fidelity;  
and this plague-spot upon the island was speedily removed. *The proprietors of Jamaica will never be able to repay these devoted men for the service they have rendered to their estates; BUT THEIR REWARD IS ON HIGH.*

But I shall be met here with the objection, that now, as slavery is completely abolished in Jamaica, these evils can no longer exist; and, in the event of the old planters cultivating a good understanding with the labourers, the sunshine of prosperity may yet smile upon the island. Admitted: but who ever heard of an act of parliament changing the dispositions of men?—The old planters are at this day what they *were*, and they will continue what they *are*. Cruelty is the atmosphere they breathe!—tyranny has grown with their growth, and

strengthened with their strength.—“The old planters cultivate a good understanding with the labourers, indeed!”—Why, at this moment, as surely as though I was within hearing, they are cursing them as preaching rascals, denouncing their ministers as incendiaries, and descending to the use of epithets at which the better tutored mind of the poor African starts with instinctive horror.—“The old planters cultivate a good understanding with the labourers, indeed!”—So long as they are in power, and so long as they retain their inveterate dislike to the religious habits of the negro, so long will acts of cruelty be perpetuated, and so long will the property of the absentee proprietor be held in a state of jeopardy.

The object of every absentee proprietor should be, by every means in his power, to conciliate and encourage the labourers. If possible, a heifer should be procured for each family; and



they should be encouraged to keep cattle, for which they could easily pay, by a return of labour. The dung of such cattle would be invaluable to the proprietor; for there is scarcely an estate in Jamaica which does not require one third more manure for its proper cultivation, and some of them one half. than what their present stock makes. By the adoption of this plan, the interests of the labourers would be bound up in the interests of the estate on which he and his family reside; otherwise he would, in all probability, wander from one property to another, proving of little use either to himself or his employers.

Properties in Jamaica differ very much, both with respect to soil and climate; and, of course, can only be properly managed by an attention to these facts. Some are called planting estates, which are generally in the interior of the country; and others are called dry-weather estates, which range along the whole of the south side

of the island, and are also to be found on some parts of the northern coast.

With regard to planting estates, some are rocky, and are more suitable to the old mode of cultivation, with the exception of being penned over after the cutting of the second ratoon; by which method they would stand at least two years more before they would require fresh planting. A cane-piece judiciously penned over seldom fails to give as good a return as a new planting, and always better sugar. Dry-weather estates are in general exceedingly profitable; but, without exception, they are the worst managed estates on the island. Although left to nature, they yield several ratoons; whereas by having plenty of cattle, which should be penned in the different cane-pieces immediately after cutting, the land would be well manured, and its pores so compressed, as to enable it to withstand the dry weather,—the

certain means of insuring a future abundant crop. It may be necessary, too, where any plants have failed, to take other cane roots from a swamp, or other marshy place, and at once stick them down, to prevent the loss of ground, or inequality of crop. The mill should be occasionally stopped during crop-time, to admit of the labourers going over the different cane-pieces, and supplying the deficiencies arising from the failure of roots, to which we have referred above. Such attention to the cane-pieces, during crop-time, would render one-third less labour unnecessary on the following year; in addition to which there would be a better sugar, and a better crop. Besides, by thus stopping the mill, time would be allowed to dry trash for fuel, and both stock and labourers would be rested.

Many of the planting estates, which usually lie low, and which are surrounded by hills,

affording abundance of grass and timber, are exceedingly suitable for ploughing. It was the interest of the attorney, however, who had either a jobbing gang of his own, or who had such a gang to manage for another, to discountenance the introduction of the plough. Jobbers were sent to such estates, and cane-holes were dug, according to the depth of the soil: in some cases these holes were not more than two inches deep. The holes were then filled with manure; and the plant, from eight to fourteen inches in length, was slightly covered. When such canes grew up, and become heavy at the top from an insufficiency of earth, they were torn up by the roots, and destroyed by the frequent breezes and heavy rains. The shallow bed, in which they were deposited, was insufficient to hold them; whereas, had the ground been ploughed and well pulverized, they would have been able to withstand either breeze or rain. In this case, therefore, the interest of the proprietor was

sacrificed to the interest of the attorney, or the attorney's friend.

On such low lands as have been now described, the May seasons set in before the trash has been turned ; and the cane-stools are frequently chilled and scalded by the heavy rains descending upon the trash. All such cane roots as are now disturbed from their beds, are at this time destroyed ; and it not unfrequently happens, that one-third of such cane-pieces require to be re-planted ; so that no hope of a favourable return for that year can be expected from such cane-pieces ; therefore disappointment is the result of such estates, according to the old system of planting ; but by skilful and judicious management, it is far from being placed beyond the possibility of a remedy.

I have lived upon many estates of this latter description, during my residence upon this

island ; and my observation and experience enable me to say, that the only manner in which they can be cultivated, so as to yield to the proprietor the greatest returns, is the following :—

1. Head trenches should be dug, for the conveyance of the water from the flat lands ; and to such main trenches, small cross trenches should be joined, by which the water would be carried away after the heavy rains.

2. Twenty acres of the most suitable land should then be penned over, by what are called flying-pens, taking in about an acre to each pen. A sufficient quantity of cattle to manure this should at once be turned on.

3. Immediately after the removal of the pen, the land thus manured should be ploughed at least ten inches deep, the ploughman taking

care to cut thin and deep, so as not to distress the cattle.

And, 4.—After the land has been thus manured and ploughed, standing pens should be made on the same ground. This should be done about a month before the time of planting. The cane-holes should be opened by the plough, at the depth of about eight inches; and a basket of dung given to each cane-hole, after the usual manner, the plant should then be laid upon the green dung and covered light. If marl, or white lime, were at hand, either would answer exceedingly well to be put in the cane-holes as a substitute for dung, on all lands having stiff clay.

A piece of land—say from twenty to thirty acres—according to the size of the estate, might thus be annually prepared, until the whole caneland on the estate was prepared in a similar manner; and it would then, I am sure, be found

that one hundred acres of such land, under cane, cultivation would produce more sugar than three hundred upon the system pursued by the old planters; besides which there would be a decrease in labour to the amount of one third.

It should be the object of every proprietor to have his pasture lands sub-divided by fences and otherwise generally attended to. Fruit trees, should be planted in all spare lands, and even in pastures; as it would be a strong inducement to the labourers to remain on the estate. When the ground provisions are burned up by the sun, the first answers exceedingly well as a substitute to the labourers. Every bread fruit tree is estimated by the labourer at, five pounds in value; and the cocoa nut tree is well worth from two to three pounds annually. Mangoe trees are also good, and the negroes feed upon them wherever they can get them, but they are greatly inferior to the bread fruit or cocoa-nut. It is



a lamentable fact, that the cultivation of these trees should have been so far overlooked; and it is still more lamentable, that where they existed, they should have been cut down by envious overseers, with the view of abridging the comforts of the poor labourers.

If the proprietors of West India estates consulted their own interests, they would forthwith send out young men, well skilled in farming, to keep an account of estates labour, stock, produce, purchases, sales, &c. The estate should be entrusted to the management of a liberal attorney; the head people should be encouraged; and it would be found that they would conduct the affairs of the estates in a far more satisfactory and profitable manner than under the old system. The black labourers are well known to be the best planters in the island. The best managed estates are at this moment under their direction only. They have the ad-

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vantage of being born on the property; they are thoroughly acquainted with all the different systems of management; and know well what land is most suitable for the growth of the cane; besides they are the best pen-keepers, the best judges of stock, and the best sugar boilers. Many of the overseers of different properties, from their ignorance of their business, were compelled to leave the management of the estates with which they were entrusted to the direction of some driver or over looker; and as to boiling sugar properly, there are ninety-nine out of every hundred of them who do not understand it at all,

Every driver, pen-keeper, overlooker and head herdsmen on an estate. whatever be the fate of the other labourers, should unquestionably be enabled to keep both a horse and a cow. It has always appeared to me to be an indulgence to which they have a fair and

equitable claim. And I am sure that no proprietor could pursue a plan more suited to the advancement of his own interests, than to employ the head men, under the direction of his attorney, to conduct the whole business of the estate at a certain fixed quarterly or half-yearly salary. He would thus get rid of an expensive and cumbrous white establishment, and the young men, experienced in agriculture, whom he might send out, would in twelve or eighteen months time, be thoroughly acquainted with their business, and would form a race of men, who it might be hoped, would prove a blessing to the country. AT ALL EVENTS SO LONG AS THE PRESENT RACE OF OVERSEERS ARE CONTINUED IN OFFICE AND SO LONG AS THE PAST SYSTEM OF MANAGEMENT IS PERSEVERED IN THE LABOURERS AND THE COUNTRY MUST GROAN BENEATH A WEIGHTY CURSE.

## SLAVE LABOUR CONTRASTED WITH FREE LABOUR.

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I here beg leave again to call the attention of the absentee proprietor, and trust he will farther peruse my few remarks on this subject, as I pen them in the earnest hope of engaging his notice to the contrast, not only as regards the labourers, but their directors also. In my early days, I had the opportunity of learning the various dispositions of the labouring class, including myself in a certain degree, and of obtaining a perfect knowledge of stock, and the

cultivation of the soil according to quality; and I, consequently, after a short period in Jamaica, formed an opinion that slavery was an evil in reference to the interests of the proprietor, from the deficiency of labour given under it, as well as a curse and torment to every one concerned. It was my opinion that the labour of *five* free labourers was fully or more than equal to the labour of *eight* slaves, of the same bodily strength. This was my calculation of slavery, contrasting it with free labour, as early as in 1820; from which period, I never had occasion to differ in opinion, up to the time of the apprenticeship; and at this period, my former opinions of the disadvantages of slave labour was not only confirmed, but was found to be much under-rated.

In proof of this, I beg the reader's attention to the following.—In 1836, I lived on York estate, in Trelawney, in the capacity of head-

book-keeper; and in 1837, I lived on Latium estate, in St. James's. On both of these estates, I lined cane-holes with two others, before thirty apprentices, while digging on their own time. In the days of slavery I lined cane-holes on Palm estate, St. Thomas-in-the-Vale, with two others of the same description as those I had on York and Latium, before eighty slaves of a strong and effective gang, and have had more time to spare than when lining before the thirty apprentices, digging on their own time, on York and Latium. In addition to this, I have farther to state, that the apprentices dug cane-holes in their own time, at the rate of £5 per acre, currency; during which period, from £8 to £9 per acre was paid to the masters of the labourers' gangs for every acre they dug into cane-holes. In further proof of my opinion, as to the greater expence of slave labour, I have to state, that while from £4 to £5 per

chain was paid for building stone walls on estates, or other properties, to the masters of labouring gangs—labourers, on their own time, built walls of the same description at the ignoble rate of 23s. to 25s. per chain, finding the materials in every respect, the same as the jobbers at £5.

Transactions of this kind disheartened the labourer, and very justly.—That a cruel and ungrateful master should give a preference to a stranger over one who was once his property, and be willing to do this at a loss of £300 per cent. to himself, was very galling, and shewed that no single act of justice, no fair play, was to be expected by the black man.

I can farther say, that six slaves cleared as much pasture, in 1837, on Latium estate, during the apprenticeship, as sixteen did in the days of slavery, under the cart-whip; when the

clothes were cut off from the backs of the labourers. During the period of slavery, the slaves were emaciated, and stiff in their joints, through repeated unmerciful punishments, working in chains for every trifling offence, and having the dungeon only at night for their repose; but in the apprenticeship-time they recovered, and their drooping spirits were enlivened by the spiritual comfort they received from their ministers, and by whom they were instructed to labour as free-men should do.

I have farther to say, that wherever I was in charge of a property as overseer, I found that slavery was productive of such evils as entirely retarded the progress of my plans for the relief of the property committed to my care.

One of the greatest misfortunes attending the planting profession generally, had been, that of the merchants sending out, as their represen-



tatives—bankrupts, disappointed clerks, profligates, soldiers, sailors, tradesmen of any and every description,—persons, who, on entering on the duties of their situation, had to take instruction from men of an equally loose character, seven-eighths of all the planters being of this class. Persons, therefore, so ill initiated in their business, were not likely to make a fair contrast between the effects of freedom and slavery. They pursued the plan then in practice, of forcing both labourers and stock beyond their strength. To such extent was this carried, that any one who adopted a plan for abbreviation of labour, or of any domestic improvement, was not only sure of getting his discharge, but left the employ with a bad character. I have experienced this myself, even where my projected plans would have been a benefit to the estate.

During the period of the apprenticeship I could not avoid observing that the majority of

the special magistrates sold themselves to the planters : a good breakfast, at one place, a dinner or supper and bed at another place, grass and plenty of corn at all times for his horse and good entertainment for his servant, led the special magistrate always to see things as the planter saw them. In addition to this, their houses were supplied with comforts from the overseers at the expence of the absent proprietor. Mr. Phelps, a special magistrate in Westmoreland, has frequently been known to decide complaints without ever admitting the labourer to speak. The apprentices were ever in terror of him and although a married man, he had the young females at his pleasure, and his progeny in this way are spread throughout his district.

It is really painful to the narrator to find that any proprietor is so blind to his own interest as to support an extensive establishment for the mere accommodation of the white servants en-

gaged on it, whose only object, to the most casual observer, seems to be, that of enriching themselves by every species of plunder on the proprietor.

The overseers' houses are generally from sixty to eighty feet square, and require a great number of servants and much furniture to render them respectable. An establishment of this kind on a three hundred hogshead estate, would in former days have cost the proprietor five thousand pounds annually; at the present time it can be constructed, and more efficiently, for five hundred pounds per annum, besides that formerly it would have cost from six hundred to one thousand pounds a year to purchase the necessary stock, while at the present time nearly the whole of this may be dispensed with by allowing the labourers to keep cattle. The muck from them will afford sufficient nutriment to the soil for the cultivation of the cane, and they

will also allow them to be trained for working by which the estates would be greatly assisted. The few working steers required for general labour should be bred by the estate.

It will also be found desirable for the proprietor to have the houses, for the residence of the white servants, made smaller and more suitable for those who occupy them. One servant should be able to keep a house clean, whereas ten have formerly been employed in such service; for the overseers should be obliged to raise his own ground provisions, and with the exception of one or two barrels of pork, should be enabled, by their small stock, to support themselves.

## EMIGRATION.

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In 1833, a bill passed the Jamaica House of Assembly, in favour of European emigration to that colony. This bill, which was supposed to have been passed with the view of assisting a few bankrupts, but principally with the design of inflicting an injury upon the black and coloured population, received the most determined opposition from all the brown gentlemen who were then in the House. The amount stipulated for these emigrants was fifteen pounds per

head. The Messrs. Myres and Lamonious at once chartered vessels, and set sail for Germany, their native country; and, by flattering accounts of Jamaica, succeeded in inducing a number of the inhabitants to accompany them on their return. The riches they would acquire in Jamaica, they were told, would enable them to return to their own country, in a few years, completely independent. Men of the lowest grade in life, totally unacquainted with agricultural labours, all volunteered their services as agriculturists, and came to the island, where they were at once disposed of at the stipulated rate. These poor people did not suit the overseers, as they could not understand each other; and they were therefore sent to different parts of the country, amongst those who were born slaves, and were placed under the eye of a driver. Some English emigrants afterwards came to the country, and were treated in a similar manner. The emi-

grants, after a very short time, began to see that they had been deceived, and that the design of the planters was to subject them to a state of the most complete vassalage. This their European dispositions and habits could not brook. Quarrelling ensued: and as a necessary consequence, they left their employment, stating that they had worked for months, and had received no more than a scanty subsistence in return for their labour. I have seen them wandering about the island, in a state of the most deplorable destitution; and in fact, entirely living upon the hospitality of the black labourers. Many of them, as they traversed the island, were covered with filth, and not a few died upon the road, from hunger and thirst. Some, indeed, died in the woods, where their bodies remained as food to the birds of prey. Small children were wandering about the island, without the means of support, having lost their protectors. Fine young females,

who had accompanied their parents, were robbed of their virtue by the wily intrigues of those who afforded them the means of subsistence.

For a short time after this discontent with the overseers, the young men and old soldiers were taken into the police. An order for their discharge, however, was speedily issued, by the Governor, Sir Lionel Smith, on the ground that they had come to the country as agriculturists, and had broken faith with their employers. Their distress now had arrived at the highest imaginable pitch. They were walking spectres,—the personification of misery and despair. They were hated and detested by the planters; and had no means of subsistence but that which the coloured population were pleased to afford.

In September, 1836, I was in charge of the



police station in the district of Moneague, in the parish of St. Ann's, when seven English emigrants came to me from Phoenix Park Pen, the property of Mr. Mitchell. They complained of hunger, and said they had been treated very ill by Mr. Breham, their overseer, and also by the attorney, Mr. Hamilton Brown. The object of their calling on me was, to try to get into the police; but I had received official orders, a few weeks before, to take no more emigrants; and they were therefore obliged to return to their employ.

In two days after, these same individuals left the property again, for the purpose of preferring a complaint against their attorney and overseer, in Spanish Town; supposing they should be unable to obtain justice at home, on the ground of the intimacy which existed between Mr. Brown, their attorney, and his brother magistrates. They went to the Queen's-

house, and were there examined ; but, on their return, they were taken up by Mr. Brown, who was then in Spanish Town, as deserters ; and as such, they were sent back to me with a letter to Mr. Special Justice Lairdlow. The weather was very wet ; and when the men were given into my charge, they presented a most frightful appearance. I immediately received a letter from the Special justice, directing me to keep them in close confinement until an investigation should take place. On receipt of this, mounting my horse, I rode to the Special Justice, and informed him that there were no provisions at the station for the support of the prisoners, and that, according to police laws, none was allowed ; and that I would therefore thank him to give me an order on the property which they had left, which was about a mile distant. The Special Justice refused. I then despatched a policeman with a note to the overseer, request-

ing him to send provisions for his emigrants : but to this he replied, that he would not give them a morsel, and that, if they were to die, it was nothing to him. I went to the Special Justice again, and stated the necessity of the case ; and told him, that if I kept them under the force of arms and starved them to death, I should be chargeable with their murder. He then asked me how they had supported themselves previously ; and I replied, that I did not know, but, as they were under my charge, I ought to know how they were to be supported in future. At this he grew angry, and said, " They are your prisoners till they are liberated—I have nothing more to do with it." I then left, not knowing what to do, but was ultimately obliged to purchase provisions for them with my own money. I wrote to the Queen's-house, stating the particulars of the case, but received no reply :—they were under my care, and were

supported by me, fourteen days, in the manner I have stated, supposing every day their case would be heard.

At last, Mr. Carter, a local magistrate, and Mr. Special Justice Wollyfrice, came to the station, accompanied by Mr. Brown, the attorney, Mr. Breham, the overseer, and several other gentlemen. The prisoners considered, that as they preferred the first complaint, they were entitled to be plaintiffs in the case; and the more so, as they had only left the property to further the ends of justice. This, however, was over-ruled, and the poor men were tried and found guilty of desertion. One of the emigrants, during the hearing of the case, endeavouring to explain the nature of their grievances, stated that their weekly allowance was barely sufficient for four days, and that whenever driven by absolute hunger, they dared to complain, their miseries were increased. At this the Special

magistrate flew into a violent passion, and said, that such cases might appear strange before country magistrates, but that to him, sitting on the Kingston bench, they were quite familiar. The court was then cleared, and six out of the seven were sentenced to five weeks' hard labour on the public roads, with the loss of all their wages up to the time of their return to the estate. The sentence of the one who had endeavoured to explain their grievances to the Bench, was extended to seven weeks, with a similar loss of wages. One of the emigrants, who had seen better days, was so terrified at the sentence, that he immediately fell sick, and shortly afterwards died.

Mr. Breham visited St. Ann's Bay some days after, and finding the emigrants at work in the inside of the gaol, he swore to the superintendent, that, unless they were sent out to work on the roads, although it was then raining in tor-

rents, he would report him to the Vestry, and have him removed.

I have quoted the above case, not with the view of discouraging emigration to the colonies, but rather for the purpose of urging upon absentee proprietors the necessity of having some definite and fixed plan, by which the mutual interests of both master and labourer would be secured.

Young men acquainted with agriculture, and of abstemious habits, should be selected, from fifteen years of age to twenty; or persons of industrious habits, and of small families. A house should be built for their reception; and lands, with plantain suckers, cocoa's, and some yams, should be allotted to them. This would be more agreeable to the labourer, and less expensive to the proprietor, than feeding them

from the estate stores. The bickerings and heart-burnings which existed between the overseers and the former emigrants would not thus be revived :—they would be able to judge of their own constitutions, and their provision-grounds would afford them an ample supply.

On their arrival at the colony, every family should be provided with a cow, and every single man with a heifer. They would thus have some stake in the country, and some inducement to locate themselves upon a particular estate ; and not be as the former emigrants, served with a scanty allowance of provisions, and left at the beck of a merciless driver. Besides, their situation would be yearly improving, and, by frugal and saving habits, they might in time not only increase their comfort, but place themselves in a position of respectability and independence.

For the first three months after landing, they

might be accompanied in their work by an intelligent black labourer, who would explain to them a variety of things, with which they must be supposed to be unacquainted;—such as the nature of the soil, the manner in which their provision-grounds should be attended to, the various seeds which should be put down, the time of planting, hoeing, cleansing, and a variety of other matters, too numerous to be mentioned.

The hours of labour should be from half-past five in the morning until eleven o'clock in the forenoon, and from two in the afternoon until five, leaving them half an hour for breakfast, and three hours for rest and refreshment in the middle of the day; thus making in all eight hours' labour in the day, except indeed, in crop time, when they might work for hire in extra hours.

For the first year, their employment should



be the care of stock and domestics, cutting grass, repairing roads and fences, taking charge of carts and waggons, trenching swamp lands, and other jobs with tradesmen. In crop-time they might load cane-carts, and act as cart-men, mule-men, cattle-catchers, boiling-house, still-house, and mill feeders, as well as do a variety of other jobs on the estate. After the first year, they would get into possession of the various descriptions of labour, and would be accustomed to the climate, as also to the habits and manners of the native people.

They should be sent to church or chapel every Sunday; and great care should be taken to prevent them from falling a prey to spirituous liquors,—that bane and curse of the whole colonies. The man in charge of the estate should encourage them, and endeavour in every possible way to secure their friendship and good will; and in proportion as these ends are

obtained, in just that same proportion will they be valuable, or otherwise, to any estate upon which they may settle down.

This, then, is the plan of emigration which I beg to submit to the notice of West India planters and proprietors;—a plan which is the result of much thought and observation; and a plan which, if adopted, cannot fail of success. Such a system of emigration, any one may conscientiously recommend or adopt; but the men who should send out emigrants under the old system, would be chargeable with the crime of having been accessory to their death. This plan, let it be distinctly understood, supposes the emigrants to be raised above the tyranny and persecution of the former oppressive overseers. UNDER THEIR MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL, I REPEAT, NO SYSTEM THAT IS ADOPTED CAN EVER BE EXPECTED TO PROVE A BLESSING TO THE COUNTRY.

It may be said by some inexperienced and thoughtless individual, that the proprietors cannot thus afford to purchase cattle for their emigrants and black labourers. To this it will be enough to reply, that without a sufficiency of cattle upon an estate, the requisite supply of manure cannot be obtained, and consequently there will be a deficiency of cane. It is to the interest of the proprietor, therefore, to provide for this. Besides, pen-keepers would be glad to give the proprietors twelve months' credit for whatever stock they might require; and long before that time, the outlay would have been repaid to the proprietor in estate labour and manure. The attention of the needy proprietor is therefore more especially called to this plan, as it cannot fail to issue in the welfare of his labourers, and in the growing and increasing prosperity of his estate.

For the future guidance of the West Indian

proprietors, I think it necessary to observe, that they should be cautious, and very guarded against all planters who are now in charge of their property : for, at this time, they are silently striving to displace the present proprietors, and substitute themselves as owners of the land, which they hope to effect by cajoling the proprietor with the hope of good returns, made upon false estimates and false promises ; while, by neglectful cultivation and exorbitant expences, the estates are falling into a state ruinous to the present proprietor.

I have earned my bread for several years past on estates, and other properties in Jamaica, belonging to GENTLEMEN RESIDENT IN ENGLAND, to whom I feel it my duty to give my best advice,—the only form of gratitude now in my power. In justice to the absent proprietors of West Indian property, I have to remark, that they were entirely innocent of the glaring cru-

elties that were practised by their planting attorneys.

I can distinctly prove, to the satisfaction of any West Indian proprietors now in England, who have cause to complain, as to the small amount of the nett proceeds of their estates, that the agents were the only cause thereof; this can be proved in various ways, by the estates' books now in the possession of the absentee proprietor; and if called upon to do so, I am willing to establish these, my accusations, at any period between this and the fall of the year, when I intend to start for Jamaica, fearless of the result of what this volume contains.

## THE COLONIAL CHURCH UNIONISTS.

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The atrocities perpetrated during Martial Law, it would appear, had not satiated the sanguinary thirst of the planters, but rather increased it, and the more they gloated over their unoffending and innocent victims, the more seems to have been their never satisfying desire, still to add to their recklessness. The discontinuance of Martial Law, arrested their progress, and the Law no longer in abeyance, once more assumed its majesty: yet, means were found

under the disgusted names of "truth and justice" to violate the law. Not content at the ruin which was already made, the murders that were committed by wholesale, and the innocent blood of the unsophisticated infants of nature which was shed, the planters sought to perpetuate their atrocities, under a band, and as if to add a solemnity to their proceedings, and to lead the unwary to believe in the holiness of their acts, dared to insult an holy church by assuming to themselves a cognomen as a blind to hide their base purposes. Every parish on the island had its band of "Colonial Church Unionist," in which were enrolled Planters, Militia Officers, Magistrates and even Clergymen. The originator was the Rev. George Willson Bridges, Rector of the parish of St. Ann. They resolved individually and collectively that they would expel by legal means, the missionaries of religion. This expulsion could not be done legally; for the toleration act of William and Mary gave free scope

to the preaching and teaching in licensed places of worship. How was it to be effected? *Vi-et-armis*. The introduction of the words "legal means" was only intended for the governor and attorney general. The latter certainly, although I doubt whether he had the desire, could not proceed against them on a resolution so carefully worded, and could only wait till a violation of the law had taken place. Many such violations did take place:—missionaries, with their families, were insulted in their own houses;—one Mr. Bleby was tarred and feathered;—their chapels were either burnt or pulled down; and the hired houses, in which christians met together on the Sabbath, to lift their voices to the Holy One, and to pray to Him to have mercy on their persecutors and slanderers, were also destroyed. But a few hours, which before beheld families living in comparative ease, and enjoying every comfort commensurate with their condition in life,—keen and bitter poverty



became their inheritance, from the misdeeds of those monsters in human shape,—with no other bed than the damp grass, and no other roof than the canopy of heaven over mothers and infants, now become homeless, and exposed to the utmost inclemency of the elements. The mothers and children, in terror at the presence of the Colonial Unionists' sought shelter in the woods. To such a height did the outrage reach, that the interference of Majesty was called in, to dissolve the associations. But the King's Proclamation, forbidding their meeting together, was treated with contempt, and torn from the public places on which it was posted. Citizens thinking the better to enforce their authority, made military harangues to the militia, when assembled on muster days, and they soon became an armed body. The Governor, then Lord Mulgrave, now Marquis of Normandy, seeing the fatal tendency that this would have, at once checked it, by depriving

the militia officers concerned, of their commission. At Huntley Pasture, he stripped Mr. Hamilton Brown, who held the commission of Lieutenant Colonel, of all his honours;—his officers and men then became so irritated, that missiles of every description were thrown at his Excellency; and a Mr. Tucker, who was caught in the fact by one of His Excellency's suite, was also stripped of his honours as Lieutenant of Militia. To Lord Mulgrave were the missionaries and the island indebted for the total extinction of this lawless band, and the peace which prevailed during his administration.

MINISTERS OF THE GOSPEL.

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These good men were opposed in the prosecution of their mission, on the moment of their arrival in Jamaica by both planters and merchants. The animosity towards them was not confined to their own person ; but the greatest cruelty was exercised over the slaves who were known to attend prayer, or act in any way in accordance with them. Nothing was more common than for a planter to ask a negro whether he was in the habit of praying. This question was

usually answered by the negroes in the negative, through fear of the consequences; seeing that their ministers themselves were insulted and mocked by planters and merchants, who circulated lies of the most base nature concerning them through the medium of the press. These worthy men have frequently had to ride through torrents of rain in performance of their duty, to their lodgings where worship was conducted, and although passing by the houses of planters, have not dared to seek shelter there, knowing that they would meet with no christian courtesy. A patch of land to build a place of worship upon, was not to be had for twenty times its value. Notwithstanding the opposition made to their proceedings, their congregations increased weekly, not only with slaves, but with a great number of the colored population who were free. And the fruits of their spiritual labours were, a great decrease of the crimes which previously pervaded every class of society. Obeah

Poisoning, Drunkenness, Fornication, &c. gave place to Industry, Integrity and Christian-like habits in general. Formerly, twenty or thirty persons were required to watch the provision grounds, canes pieces, works and cattle pens ; and could not even then prevent theft, which frequently terminated in murder. When the apprenticeship took place, at which time, the gospel was generally preached throughout the island, four or five persons instead of twenty or thirty, above referred to, were all that was needed. The dwelling houses of the planters were even frequently left open all night, in which there were silver spoons and plate of considerable value.

In addition to these good effects of missionary exertions, many of the brown population received spiritual and moral instruction. The cart whip, too became less active, and much of the previous brutal barbarity to the slaves were

diminished. The attornies had their share in this amendment, fearing, as they acknowledged, an exposure in the British Parliament by the Anti-Slavery Societies. The Rev. W. Knibb and the Rev. T. Burchell were a terror TO ALL PLANTERS, MERCHANTS, AND ALL EVIL DOERS OF EVERY DESCRIPTION IN JAMAICA.

**ON THE HABITS OF SOCIETY ENGEN-  
DERED BY SLAVERY.**

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Persons unacquainted with countries in which slavery exists, would scarcely believe that such habits could obtain as are to be met with in every slave colony.

The children of slaves were allowed to run about naked up to five years of age, and in some instances, even full-grown male negroes went

about with little or no covering, while working; and such was the force of habit that young ladies of the first distinction, and apparently invested with modesty and virtue, could stand deliberately viewing men in this state without the least annoyance to their feelings. I have known young ladies, who have received a polished education, with the accomplishments of music and dancing, quit their party to superintend the flogging of an unfortunate slave, and that done in the most indelicate manner too. I have known floggings to take place at the instance of ladies, under the disgusting orders that the clothes of the poor sufferer should be stripped off, in order that a full measure of vengeance should be inflicted. Indeed I have observed, that married ladies frequently excel their husbands in the cruelty of the whip.

And I wish them to know, that they owe it to my forbearance in respect of their sex only,



that I do not here write out their names at full length. The inbred arrogance of a white child, brought up among black children, is painfully pressed upon the observation of a person unaccustomed to such a land of tyranny as a slave colony always is. At even two years of age, the black child cowers and shrinks before the white child, who at all times slaps and beats it at pleasure, and takes away its toys without the smallest manifestation of opposition on the part of the piccaninni. I have frequently seen a white child crying, when the little slave, so utterly a slave from his birth, would say to the crying child,—“ Massa, knock me, don't cry !—you, my massa; —me, you nega.”

I now proceed to the vicious effects of the system on the *youth* of the white population.—So early as at fifteen years of age, it is quite common for a boy to select for himself a mistress; and this is usually done from among

the waiting maids of his mother or sisters. He keeps her in the house of his parents, as his concubine; and the produce of this connexion remain in the house until old enough to be taken, like beasts of burthen, and trained to undergo field labour. At this time the ties of father and mother are no longer considered by the owners; but the child is driven out into the field, like any other part of the stock on the estate. This exhibits the amount of affection in a planter's bosom for the child of his own body!

I cannot close this section without remarking on the injurious effects which this profligacy of habit in the young men has on the moral sense of the female part of the family. The intercourse between their brothers and their coloured mistresses being constantly before their eyes, their own minds become necessarily free from the restraints imposed upon the indulgence of

the passions in well regulated and moral society. I state it with feelings in which disgust and horror are equally combined, that several instances occurred, in the estates on which I resided, of sisters and daughters having become the objects of seduction by their own brothers and fathers. An instance is now present to my mind, of a fine handsome woman, of some distinction in Trelawney, who, living under the same roof with her brother, was seduced by him, and became enceinte. It was kept unknown in the neighbourhood, until she determined on going to Kingston, to get rid of the object of her shame. On the way there with her maid servant, she stopped at Moneague Tavern, in St. Ann's, for the night. She was there delivered of a child. Her maid servant, on the following morning, was observed by Mr. Longbottom, the tavern-keeper, to carry out a very large tin kettle. He so far indulged his curiosity as to examine its contents, and found it to

be the body of a new born child that had been murdered. In the first shock of horror which was created by this event, the unfortunate young woman confessed that it was a child she had borne to her own brother, who was a medical man in the parish. I am sorry to say, that this is not a singular instance of the perpetration of crime so unnatural.

There is at this period a gentleman at Trelawney, of the best education and of high classical attainments, who has similarly completed the destruction of his own white daughter; once his chief pride, but now a living public memorial of his and her infamy. These are *some* of the fruits of slavery, and not *uncommon* fruits, wherever slavery obtains its footing.

The debasing effects of the slave system were as offensively exhibited in their effects on the male population of *mature* age. Men arrived

even at seventy years of age, were in the habit of keeping mistresses in their houses, along with their grown-up daughters. It is not necessary to depict, for the notice of a father or mother of grown-up daughters in England, the demoralizing influence which such a course of libertinism must have on young women arriving at womanhood. But there are still more debasing habits resorted to, towards accomplishing the gratification of sensual indulgence. The history of Mr. M'Clean, an attorney of eminence, a man arrived at *seventy* years of age, would furnish evidence of such attempts to awaken the exhausted power of indulgence, as is too disgusting to be further detailed.

I think it necessary to call the attention of proprietors still farther to the conduct of attorneys, as described in page 139, &c., as well as that of overseers, sanctioned by these faithless and mercenary attorneys; and I trust that absen-

tees will do me the justice to say, that I have not screened the delinquencies of their servants. On the contrary, I know that I have exposed myself to their future animosity. Should they attempt to exonerate themselves from the stain of my accusations, by resorting to a prosecution :—it will only farther enable me to make other exposures. I make use of no expressions against the planters, but what are to be met with in the common discourse of overseers at table. The entire substance of their conversation it would be impossible to pen with propriety ; for what planters know of each other, are secrets to all of a different profession. Proprietors should give the charge of their properties to men only who live on the spot, and not to any one who has the charge of more than six. It would be also necessary, that the proprietors should communicate with the overseers in charge of their property, by which they would always know the true state of cultivation and

other improvements carried on in the estate,—the situation of an overseer always depending on his abilities as a planter.—There are many of the attorneys who know nothing of the profession, and therefore they are entirely dependent on the abilities of the overseer. Many wanting the good sense to avail themselves of the overseer's information, and following their own plans, pursue such measures as necessarily involve the estate in ruin. Many discharge their overseers, and employ their friends, who know nothing of the management of an estate; whereas if there was a proper understanding between the proprietor and the overseer, it would greatly assist towards the prevention of such mischievous acts as are frequent with attorneys.

In concluding this volume, I feel myself called upon to make the following remarks, trusting that the reader will not entertain a doubt of what I here set forth.—I left Jamaica,

with an intention to do justice to every class of society there, connected with slavery; so far as truth would bear me out. I therefore commenced my narrative of professional habits both cautiously and timidly, lest the people of England should not only believe my statements, but exaggerate them:—of this I can speak confidently—*there is not a planter in Jamaica who will deny them.* A seven months' residence in London has made much alteration in this opinion of mine, as I find it difficult to induce some of my friends to believe the customary, nay daily, practices of my profession in Jamaica.

I have a claim to belief, in that it is against my interest to raise a false accusation. I am professionally a planter, and intend to continue in that line of life, by returning to Jamaica, where I can be brought to account for every line contained in this volume. I therefore misrepresent no man. According to the view of



libel which my understanding will alone admit of  
 I libel no man:—by this I mean, that TRUTH  
 is no libel. I am aware that this book will fall  
 into the hands of many an imprudent youth, who  
 may thirst after the persecution of all under  
 his control:—such an one will pay but lit-

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breach, perjury, or any other crime, or  
 bring upon me.

B. M'MAHON.

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